



Policy – Electronic communication (email)

Email may be used by the practice to transmit information outside the practice.

Ideally communication should be via secure messaging or encryption but this is generally not possible when emailing patients.

The practice has an obligation to take reasonable steps to protect the privacy and security of information it holds including when it is transmitted or disclosed outside the organisation.

The practice follows the RACGP recommendations to reduce the risk of interception of data and sending emails to incorrect addresses, including:

- use of passwords for sensitive information
- verification of the patient's email address
- obtaining patient consent
- use of secure messaging facilities between practices where available

Procedure

Request for information to be sent via email - Generally, Southern Cross GP Clinics do not communicate with patients via email; however, if communication via email occurs, the following procedure is followed:

If a patient requests information to be sent by email, the practice:

1. Explains to the patient that email is not a secure form of communication
2. Seeks the patient's consent to use email and asks the patient to provide the email address they would like the practice to use.
3. Email is sent to address provided and a copy of the email and any attachments would be saved to the patients file.

The practice will document the patient consent and maintain a record of information sent via email to the patient in accordance with the email policy.

Southern Cross Medical Clinics do not provide an email contact forms on the clinic web pages and therefore does not have a standard response for email communication via contact form.