

C.1.1 Communication Policy

C1.2 A Our practice manages communications from patients.

Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for receiving and returning telephone calls and electronic communications at Her Medical, in compliance with RACGP standards. Our goal is to ensure timely, effective, and professional communication with our patients.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members at Her Medical, including general practitioners, nurses, administrative staff, and other healthcare professionals.

Telephone Communications

Receiving Calls

1. **Office Hours:** Telephone calls are received during office hours (Monday to Friday, 7:15am to 5:00pm).
2. **Emergencies:** In case of an emergency, callers are advised to call Her Medical after Hours Triage 0468 439 990 or dial 000 or visit the nearest hospital.
3. **After-Hours:** Calls received outside of office hours are directed to an answering service, which advises callers of emergency contact information and the next available office hours.

Returning Calls

1. **Priority:** Calls are prioritised based on urgency and the nature of the inquiry. Medical emergencies are addressed immediately.
2. **Response Time:** Non-urgent calls are returned within one business day.
3. **Documentation:** All telephone communications are documented in the patient's medical record.

Electronic Communications

Receiving Electronic Communications

1. **Methods:** We receive electronic communications via email and through our online patient portal.
2. **Security:** All electronic communications are secured and comply with privacy and confidentiality standards.
3. **Acknowledgment:** An automatic acknowledgment is sent upon receipt of electronic communications, confirming that the message has been received.

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Responding to Electronic Communications

1. **Priority:** Electronic communications are prioritised based on urgency and the nature of the inquiry.
2. **Response Time:** Non-urgent electronic communications are responded to within two business days.
3. **Confidentiality:** Responses are sent through secure channels to ensure patient confidentiality.
4. **Documentation:** All electronic communications and responses are documented in the patient's medical record.

Communication Guidelines

Professionalism

1. **Tone and Language:** All communications should be professional, respectful, and clear.
2. **Clarity:** Ensure that all information provided is accurate and easily understood by the patient.
3. **Verification:** Verify patient identity before discussing any personal health information.

Patient Instructions

1. **Call Instructions:** Patients are informed about our communication policy, including expected response times and procedures for urgent inquiries.
2. **Electronic Instructions:** Patients are advised to use electronic communications for non-urgent matters only.

Training and Compliance

1. **Staff Training:** All staff members are trained on this communication policy and its procedures.
2. **Compliance Monitoring:** Compliance with this policy is regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure adherence to RACGP standards.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure continued compliance with RACGP standards and the needs of our patients.