

Ensuring Confidentiality in the Practice

An important responsibility in any Practice is to ensure the privacy of patients. Privacy and confidentiality of patient information needs to be considered at all times, including during telephone conversations between staff and patients, and when handling any confidential documents.

Consultation rooms should be private, ensuring conversations taking place between patients and their Doctor are not overheard. The use of background music, or a television in the waiting area, may also help to mask conversations between staff members.

The privacy of patients may also be ensured by the use of a curtain or screen, and a gown or sheet when a patient needs to undress for a clinical examination or procedure.

The use of passwords on computers within the Practice, as well as screen savers, can help minimise the risk of confidential information being viewed by an unauthorised person, as well as staff ensuring physical information is not left where it can be viewed or accessed by other patients.

The physical arrangement of the Practice needs to be considered in regards to ensuring privacy and confidentiality for patients. The layout of the reception and waiting areas can also assist in providing patient privacy, especially when patients are discussing personal issues with Practice staff.

Please refer to the RACGP *Standards for General Practices* (4th Edition) for more information about confidentiality.