

# Patient Information Sheet



## This general practice takes part in MedicineInsight

Please read this information sheet as it provides details about MedicineInsight and your involvement.

## What is MedicineInsight?

MedicineInsight is a national primary health care data program run by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) in partnership with general practices across Australia. The program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and has received ethics approval from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) (Reference Number: 23-171).

You can find more information about the Commission by visiting [www.safetyandquality.gov.au](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au)

## What information does MedicineInsight collect?

MedicineInsight collects patient information from the medical records held in this practice and sends it to a secure database in Australia. This information is combined with data from other general practices across Australia to form a database. The information the practice sends to this database is non-identifiable – this means it does not have names or any personal information that might identify the patient. This database enables the Commission to compare and discover trends in diagnoses, treatments, and outcomes of general practice patients at a national level.

When a general practice joins the program, MedicineInsight installs a data extraction tool on the practice computer system. This tool works with the general practice's clinical software to remove personal information from the patient's

medical record such as name, address, and date of birth. This process is known as de-identification and turns the information into a non-identifiable format before it sends it to the secure Australian database for use by the Commission.

The non-identifiable information the practice sends to the MedicineInsight database is:

- age, sex, gender, and postcode
- whether a patient identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- medical history (for example, conditions, allergies, procedures, weight)
- health care information such as medicines, medical tests, vaccines, and referrals
- lifestyle factors such as smoking and alcohol consumption
- sensitive and notifiable conditions such as hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Only authorised people from the Commission are allowed to access the information held in the MedicineInsight database. Your practice and the Commission work together to take reasonable steps to ensure the information collected about you is used and stored in a way that is safe, secure and in line with privacy policy.

In some cases your general practice may be able to re-identify patient information provided in reports to assist them in providing better care to you – only your practice has the ability and authority to do so. For example this could take the form of encrypted numbers that a general practice can convert to a list of patients with a respiratory illness who are overdue for a particular medical test.

A copy of the Commission's privacy policy can be found here: [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/about-us/governance/privacy-policy](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/about-us/governance/privacy-policy). Your practice can also provide you with a copy of their data sharing policy. [▶ Continues](#)

## How does MedicinesInsight use collected information?

The MedicinesInsight program uses this information to report back to general practices and individual general practitioners to help them improve the way they use health technologies, medicines, and medical tests. This helps your doctor give you the best quality health care.

The Commission also combines this information into national reports to give to the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. These reports could include information on:

- the safety, usage and prescribing of medicines, vaccines and medical devices or tests
- use and access of a health service by specific groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with a cognitive impairment or intellectual disability and/or people in remote and rural locations
- the treatment of chronic conditions (such as diabetes, asthma, and cancer) and infections (such as influenza, coronavirus, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)).

These reports are used to help develop national policies and programs to help people access and use medicines safely and effectively.

They also identify areas of need in primary health care and population health to support improvements on the safety and quality of health care provided to patients. The Commission also uses MedicinesInsight data to undertake audit, training, evaluation and/or quality improvement activities to validate the accuracy and reliability of collected data.

MedicinesInsight data may also be provided to select third parties (e.g. government departments, government-funded organisations, not-for-profit organisations, and research institutes) for purposes related to informing primary care policy, public health initiatives, research, and service delivery. All requests to use MedicinesInsight data are subject to internal review and approval process that involve an assessment of privacy, confidentiality and security standards and determination of benefit to public good and general practice.

All third-party projects using MedicinesInsight data must have ethics approval and are only provided with non-identifiable information. Sometimes these third parties may wish to join MedicinesInsight data with other different data sources (e.g., hospital records or education records). This process is known as data linkage and is undertaken

by third parties to help them better understand the patient experiences across different health settings, to contribute to improved patient care.

The Commission is committed to being transparent with consumers (patients) about the type of projects that receive MedicinesInsight data. A public register of approved projects can be found here: <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/indicators-measurement-and-reporting/medicinesinsight/medicinesinsight-research-projects-register>

## Do I have a say in whether the practice sends my information to the MedicinesInsight program?

The practice will automatically send your non-identifiable information to MedicinesInsight unless you tell the practice that you do not want it to be sent.

Being part of the MedicinesInsight collection is voluntary and you can opt out at any time, for any reason. Any decision you make will not influence the standard of care you receive now or in the future, or your relationship with your doctor.

If you don't want this general practice to send your non-identifiable information to MedicinesInsight, you can opt out of the program.

Please ask the practice to give you a copy of the MedicinesInsight opt-out form to complete and say that you want to opt out of the program. The completed form will remain at this practice and will not be shared with the Commission.

When you opt out of the program, the practice will stop sending your information to the MedicinesInsight database. If you go to another general practice which also takes part in the MedicinesInsight program, you will have to repeat the opt out process at that practice.

## How can I find out more about MedicinesInsight if I have any questions?

You can ask the practice reception or your doctor for more information. Commission staff are also available to answer any questions via the below contact details.

Scan the QR code below, visit [safetyandquality.gov.au/MedicinesInsight](https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/MedicinesInsight), call 1300 721 726 or email [medicinesinsight@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:medicinesinsight@safetyandquality.gov.au)

