

Hopton Dental Surgery

Data protection code of practice for patients

Keeping your records

This practice complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 and this policy describes our procedures for ensuring that personal information about patients is processed fairly and lawfully.

The personal data that we hold

To provide you with a high standard of dental care and attention, we need to hold personal information about you. This personal data includes:

- Your past and current medical and dental condition; personal details such as your age, National Insurance number/NHS number, address, telephone number and your general medical practitioner
- Radiographs, clinical photographs and study models
- Information about the treatment that we have provided or propose to provide and its cost
- Notes of conversations/incidents about your care, for which a record needs to be kept
- Records of consent to treatment
- Correspondence with other health care professionals relating to you, for example in the hospital or community services.

Reasons for holding this information

We need to keep comprehensive and accurate personal data about our patients to provide them with safe and appropriate dental care. For NHS patients we also need to process personal data about you in order to provide care under NHS arrangements and to ensure the proper management and administration of the NHS.

Hopton Dental Surgery has adopted the following three principles of confidentiality:

- Personal information about a patient is confidential to those providing healthcare.
- It should only be provided to those who would be unable to provide effective care without that information (Need-to-know)

- Information should not be disclosed to third parties without consent of the patient except in the circumstances set out in the first paragraph.

What this means to you:

- Records should be kept secure and in a location that prevents other individuals from reading them.
- When talking to a patient on the telephone or in a public area care should be taken to ensure that sensitive information is not overheard by other patients.
- Details of names, addresses, telephone numbers, attendance or financial record, treatment histories or plans, medical history or information about other family members should not be divulged.
- Messages regarding patient care should not be left on answer machines. A message to call the practice is all that can be left.
- Discussions being conducted within hearing of any patient should be on strictly professional matters, never discussing a patient by name.
- Conversations on non-professional matters should be reserved for the staff room.
- Any member of staff who breaks these rules will be liable for summary dismissal.
- All data processed at this practice must remain confidential even if your employment has terminated. (it is an offence under the Data Protection Act 1998 to disclose such information)

Retaining information

We will retain your dental records while you are a practice patient and after you cease to be a patient, for at least eleven years or, for children, until age of 25, whichever is the longer.

Security of information

Personal data about you is held in the practice's computer system and/or in a manual filing system. The information is not accessible to the public; only authorised members of staff have access to it. Our computer system has secure audit trails, is password protected and we back-up information routinely.

Disclosure of information

To provide proper and safe dental care, we may need to disclose personal information about you to:

- Your general medical practitioner
- The hospital or community dental services
- Other health professionals caring for you
- NHS payment authorities

- HM Revenue and Customs
- The Department for Work and Pensions and its agencies, where you are claiming exemption or remission from NHS charges
- Private dental schemes of which you are a member.

Disclosure will take place on a 'need-to-know' basis. Only those individuals or organisations who need to know in order to provide care to you – or in order to ensure the proper administration of Government (whose personnel are covered by strict confidentiality rules) - will be given the information. Only the information that the recipient needs to know will be disclosed.

In very limited circumstances or when required by law or a court order, personal data may be disclosed to a third party not connected with your health care. In all other situations, disclosure that is not covered by this Code of Practice will only occur when we have your specific consent.

Where possible, you will be informed of these requests for disclosure.

Access

You have the right of access to the data that we hold about you and to receive a copy. Access may be obtained by making a request in writing and the payment of a fee of up to £15 (for records held on computer) or up to £50 (for those held manually, including non-digital radiographs). We will provide a copy of the record within 40 days of receipt of the request and fee and an explanation of your record should you require it.

If you do not agree

If you do not wish personal data that we hold about you to be disclosed or used in the way that is described in this Code of Practice, please discuss the matter with your dentist. You have the right to object, but this may affect our ability to provide you with dental care.