

Communication Policy

Complete Health at Crossways endeavours to provide patients with access to timely advice or information about their clinical care. The Reception team, as the first point of contact, will triage all communications to ensure they are correctly addressing patient's needs and concerns. Receptionists will often need to ask questions to determine that the patient receives the most appropriate care, at the most appropriate time. At times you may also be referred to speak to one of our clinical staff to determine the urgency or best course of action for your issue or concern. Our Practice uses the following communication channels:

Telephone

We aim to communicate effectively over the telephone and use simple, straight forward language and check that patients have understood what has been said. The urgency of a patients needs are determined promptly.

All telephone calls are answered by a member of the practice who will:

- Follow the practice booking system for all patient appointments
- Before any calls are placed on hold staff will first ask if the matter is an emergency
- Follow the practice triage system for patients requesting urgent appointments
- Ensure that the patient is correctly identified by using three of the approved patient identifiers:
 - Family name and given names
 - Date of birth
 - Gender (as identified by the patient)
 - Address
 - Patient health record number, where it exists
 - Individual Healthcare Identifier
 - A medicare number is not an approved identifier
- Be mindful of confidentiality and the patient's right to privacy
- Be aware and follow each GP's policy on accepting or returning calls

Our Practice may contact you via telephone calls to confirm or notify you of any changes to your scheduled appointment, recalls requiring attention after patient has had blood tests or imaging requests and health promotion reminders (optional).

It is therefore extremely important that all patient contact number's are kept up to date at each visit. All urgent recalls will be made by the treating GP and non-urgent recalls will be made by our Practice Nurse. All results for non-urgent recalls will be given to the patient during the follow up consultation with the GP.

We offer telephone consultations, however not all medical services can be provided over the phone. The GP may request for you to attend for a face-to-face appointment instead.

Patients are able to contact the practice via telephone between the following hours:

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday – 8am to 5pm

Thursday – 8am to 6pm

Fridays – 8am to 2pm.

Telephone calls from patients will not generally be put through to GP's immediately as they are usually attending to patients throughout the day. Our reception staff will be happy to take down contact details and the message to pass on. Our GP's will be in touch on the same day or if they are not available on the day, the next time they are scheduled to be in clinic.

Electronic communications

Electronic communication provides a useful and alternative point of access for our patients. Our patients have the option to contact, or be contacted by our practice through electronic means via email and/or SMS.

Email

Our practice email account for patients and stakeholders for communication with our practice is admin@completehealthatcrossways.com.au. Only appropriate non-clinical matters are dealt with via email exchanges. No consulting or advice services are conducted by email. This must be communicated face to face by a medical practitioner or other appropriate health professional, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Patients may use email to communicate to our Practice and this will be considered as patient consent to reply via email. We endeavour to reply to all emails within 48 hours of the enquiry. Our emails are checked on a regular basis, however they are not constantly monitored. If you have an issue that requires urgent attention, we ask that you contact the practice by telephone or in person. All messages from patients, to patients, or about patients become part of the patient's health record, in addition to any actions taken in response to the message.

Whilst we make every effort to keep your information secure it is important for patients to be aware of the risks associated with electronic communication, in that the information could potentially be compromised and accessed by someone other than the intended recipient. Patients must be aware that any communication they direct to the surgery via email is also NOT secure and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Patients communicating through email do so at their own risk.

A patient may request for a copy of their results be sent to their email address during a phone consultation with the GP. Results must be discussed with the GP before they are released. Please note our receptionist and nursing staff do not have the authority to release any results if these results have not been discussed and approved for release by a GP. The GP will confirm the email address details and our reception staff will email you the documents in a password protected file.

SMS

Our practice uses SMS messages for the following reasons SMS messages are sent for a variety of health management purposes.

- Appointment reminders – a reminder message will be sent the day prior to your appointment.
- Preventative health reminders including cancer screenings, annual physical examinations, health assessments, healthy heart checks etc.

Fax

Faxes received that are patient related are imported directly into the patient's file. These are then reviewed and actioned by the doctor. Any urgent patient related faxes are immediately handed to the doctor or if that doctor is not available another doctor in the practice will review the fax. All non-patient related faxes are given to the relevant staff member.

All outgoing faxes will be accompanied with a practice cover sheet advising details of who the fax is addressed to, fax number, number of pages and confidentiality and privacy notice.

Post

Letters may be sent offering services available to eligible patients and for health reminders and recalls for patients who do not have a mobile number or who have opted out of our electronic messaging system. Incoming mail is collected and opened each day. Letters received that are patient related are directly imported in the patient's medical record. These are then reviewed and actioned by the doctor. All remaining letters are provided to the addressee.

Website

The Practice website is updated regularly with new information. Patients can access up-to-date information about the practice including our opening hours, billing policy, history of the practice, frequently asked questions, GP and staff profiles, feedback and contact information, after hours care and details on the range of services that we provide. Patients have access to our Policies and are also able to book appointments online through our website using HotDoc.

Facebook

Our [Facebook page](#) provides general health updates and practice information. This page however, is intended for announcements by Complete Health at Crossways and not for the provision of individual medical advice. If you have any queries or questions, we ask that you please contact the practice via telephone.

Discussing Medical Information

The Practice Manager and reception staff members are not qualified to provide medical advice and are not entitled to discuss any medical information over phone, email, or any other communication channel. If you wish to discuss your health, you will need to make an appointment with a doctor or nurse.

Online appointment booking

Our aim is to facilitate optimal communication opportunities with our patients. We also encourage and support the use of digital technology to enable our patient with 24-hour access to our appointment system. Our practice allows patients to book their healthcare appointment with their preferred healthcare provider online via the booking page or direct with HotDoc.

Longer appointments

The following appointments will require a longer appointment:

- New patient appointment
- Driving medical
- Health Assessments
- Skin checks
- Healthy heart checks
- Immunisation (children)

Please advise the reception team when making these types of appointments.

Communicating With Patients with Special Needs

A contact list of translator and interpreter services and services for patients with a disability is maintained, updated regularly and readily available to all staff at reception. These include:

- [National Relay Service \(NRS\)](#)
- [National Interpreter Booking Service \(NABS\)](#)
- Auslan services 1300 AUSLAN
- Translation and Interpreter Service (TIS) Doctors Priority Line 1300 131 450