



ACT DERMATOLOGY

POLICY DOCUMENT

Referrals

We give priority to patients who present with a referral from a doctor. Referrals from your GP are valid for 12 months, whereas referrals from specialists are valid for 3 months. Please note that indefinite referrals may not be accepted, as this is at our Doctors discretion.

We request that referrals be emailed, faxed or posted for triaging so that an appointment can be allocated in order of urgency of your condition. Please ensure that your correct contact details are noted on your referral, including phone number, email address and postal address. You will be contacted by email /post with the next available appointment date and time.

We may return referrals for non-urgent conditions, due to lack of available appointments. Your referral, together with our letter will be forwarded back to your GP/referrer's attention, requesting that they arrange alternate referral arrangements on your behalf.

Please note that patients without a Medicare card e.g. expatriates and overseas patients, do not require a referral for appointments although your appointment will also be triaged in order of urgency of their condition.

Appointment guide and policy

We respectfully ask that you adhere to our appointment policy so that we can run appointments efficiently and as close to time as possible, as a courtesy and respect to all patients.

The time allocated for a standard consultation is usually only adequate for one skin issue to be addressed properly. Additional concerns you may wish to discuss cannot always be addressed during the same consultation and will require an additional appointment. If a patient presents with a complex, or multiple problems, requiring an extended consultation, you will be charged a higher consultation fee.

As appointments are limited, we do not allow patients to make multiple future appointments at a time, this is to ensure that all patients have the opportunity to receive timely healthcare (exception for patients attending for UVB/UVA treatment).

Cancellation policy for New and Returning Patients

You will receive a SMS to confirm your appointment 3 days before your scheduled appointment, we ask that you respond immediately to this message with Yes to confirm or N to cancel (if cancelling by SMS you will need to contact Reception

to reschedule). If no reply is received within 24 hours, your appointment will be cancelled and will be offered to another patient on our waiting list.

Appointment availability is limited, and missed appointments deny us the opportunity to help other patients. A fee will be charged for missed appointments or last minute cancellations of less than 48 hours' notice, barring exceptional circumstances. A replacement appointment cannot be offered for missed appointments in most cases.

Professional fees and payment policy

Every effort is made to ensure that our professional fees are fair and structured to reflect the level of expertise and time required to provide you with the best standards of specialist care.

As this is a private practice, please note that we **do not bulk bill**. Therefore, all consultations and procedures will involve out-of-pocket costs except for DVA cardholders. We do however, offer discounts to pensioners and Healthcare cardholders. Medicare rebates have not risen in recent years and we do not receive any government subsidy to cover our substantial and continually rising costs of operation to provide you with quality healthcare. Usually, new patients are provided with the cost of an initial consultation fee. This fee may be higher for extended consultations, for complex issues and where multiple problems are discussed. Further services or procedures will attract additional fees (including excisions/cryotherapy/skin biopsy/phototherapy). Please ask your doctor for a quotation prior to your treatment. Some services do not attract a Medicare rebate.

All accounts must be settled on the day of your consultation and treatment/s. Accepted methods of payment are cash and Visa/MasterCard debit or credit cards. We **do not** accept American Express. Please note that unpaid debts will be referred to a professional debt collection service.

If you would prefer not to pay private consulting and treatment fees, please let your referring doctor know as they have the option of referring you to a public hospital dermatology clinic. However, the waiting list for appointments at public clinics is substantially longer and there is much less flexibility with appointments.

Lost Prescriptions/ Pathology Request forms

Where a patient has lost/misplaced their prescription or pathology request form and requests another copy, a \$35 fee will apply.

Our Doctors will not issue prescriptions to patients who have not had a consultation with the Doctor within three months. A review consultation will be required, at the next available appointment time, which may incur a waiting period, due to our heavy bookings. It is the patient's responsibility to ensure they have adequate supply of their prescription to be requested at each appointment with the Doctor.

Practice Communication by Email and SMS

Email service used by this practice is non secure and unencrypted. There are risks to your privacy using email to communicate with the practice staff or doctors. You will need to provide written consent that you understand and accept this before any email communication can be undertaken.

Very limited clinical advice can or will be provided via email. Any advice provided via email by the doctor will be of a general nature only. Diagnoses can be difficult or impossible to make with a description of the problem. Photographs may be useful but often because of suboptimal quality it is not possible to make an assessment.

Email may not be accessed or checked for 2-3 days at a time, so email should not be used for any urgent situation. If this is the case, the practice should be contacted by phone. If staff are unavailable to take your call or the practice is closed, you should contact your general practitioner, or if an emergency you should attend the Emergency Department at your nearest hospital. A record of email communication will be stored in your medical file.

SMS

The practice staff or doctors may need to contact you via SMS to confirm an appointment, send a reminder about a test, or communicate normal test results. Your written consent is needed to be able to do this.

Possible Delays

The nature of medicine dictates that doctors never know what will come through our door - every patient and every problem is unique.

Every effort to run appointments on time is made, but delays due to the severe shortage of Dermatologists here in Canberra, together with unavoidable patient circumstances, such as the need to attend to an acutely unwell patient, or an urgent excision of skin cancers are common.

If your appointment time is delayed, we do thank you for understanding that this is likely due to a patient ahead of you who requires more medical attention. Rest assured that the same high standard of care will also be offered to you should you require similar attention.

We respectfully ask that consideration and respect be shown to our staff members at all times. Please note that rudeness, bad language, intimidation or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated in our practice. You will be asked to leave our practice and will not be offered any further appointments.

Please ring 45 minutes ahead of your appointment time to check if appointments are running to time if this is a concern.

Expected Behaviour Policy

In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for staff, visitors, patients and their families, ACT Dermatology expects visitors, patients and accompanying family members to refrain from unacceptable behaviours that are disruptive or pose a threat to the rights or safety of other patients or staff. ACT Dermatology is committed to providing a high quality of care to our patients. The relationship between the patients and those working in the surgery is an important issue and is a two-way process. Therefore, in order to protect both the staff and other patients, we have a zero tolerance policy and respectfully point out that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Loud and intrusive conversation or other noise including playing music on devices.
- Offensive language, verbal abuse, swearing or psychological abuse
- Sexual harassment and sexual assault.

- Offensive remarks of a racial, sexual or personally derogatory nature.
- Invasion of personal space.
- Talking on mobile phones in the waiting room or during the doctor patient consultation.
- Physical assault, including unsuccessful contact.
- Damage to practice property or that of other patients.
- Reckless behaviour that could result in harm to others.
- Inappropriate behaviour involving alcohol or substance misuse.
- Discussing medical practice staff on social media forums.
- Taking photos or videos of practice staff or the practice setting without express permission from the staff member and practice.

Such behaviour has a marked effect on staff and other patients and therefore, where such behaviour is observed, we reserve the right to withdraw from treating the patient and ensuring removal of those involved from the premises. If staff feel threatened verbally or physically, the police will be called.

A patient displaying any of the above behaviours may be removed from our patient list resulting in terminating the doctor/patient relationship.