

PRIVACY POLICY

Dr N Petropoulos (PTY) Ltd

Operating as Equilibrium Health

Effective Date: April 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dr N Petropoulos (PTY) Ltd ("we," "us," "our," or "the Practice") is committed to protecting your privacy and personal information. We understand the sensitive nature of healthcare information and take our responsibilities under South African law seriously.

This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, store, and protect your personal information in accordance with:

- The Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013) ("POPIA")
- The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000) ("PAIA")
- The National Health Act, 2003 (Act No. 61 of 2003)
- The Health Professions Act and HPCSA guidelines

By using our services, visiting our premises, or engaging with us in any way, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this Privacy Policy.

2. WHO WE ARE

2.1 Practice Details

Legal Entity: Dr N Petropoulos (PTY) Ltd

Trading at: Equilibrium Health EQH (PTY) Ltd

Practice Type: Private Medical Clinic

Registration: Registered with the Information Regulator of South Africa

Contact Information:

Physical Address: Unit 3, 67 Brahma Avenue, Lethabong, Modderfontein, Johannesburg, 1609

Telephone: 010 500 7541

Email: info@eqhmedical.co.za

Website: www.eqhmedical.co.za

2.2 Information Officer

Title: Information Officer

Contact: info@eqhmedical.co.za

Telephone: 010 500 7541

The Information Officer is responsible for:

- Overseeing POPIA compliance
- Processing requests for access to information
- Handling privacy-related complaints
- Liaising with the Information Regulator

3. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This Privacy Policy applies to:

- All patients who receive healthcare services from the Practice
- Visitors to our physical premises
- Users of our website and online services
- Individuals who communicate with us via email, phone, WhatsApp, or other channels
- Potential patients making inquiries
- Legal guardians of minor patients
- Third parties authorized to act on behalf of patients

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 POPIA Compliance

We are a "responsible party" under POPIA and process personal information in accordance with the eight conditions for lawful processing:

1. Accountability
2. Processing limitation
3. Purpose specification
4. Further processing limitation
5. Information quality

6. Openness
7. Security safeguards
8. Data subject participation

4.2 Special Personal Information

As a healthcare provider, we process **special personal information** which includes:

- Health and medical information
- Race or ethnic origin (where relevant for treatment)
- Biometric information (where applicable)
- Genetic information (where applicable)

This information receives enhanced protection under POPIA.

4.3 Healthcare-Specific Legislation

In addition to POPIA, we comply with:

- National Health Act (doctor-patient confidentiality)
- Health Professions Act and HPCSA ethical guidelines
- Medical Schemes Act (for billing and claims)
- Medicines and Related Substances Act

Important: Where healthcare legislation provides greater protection than POPIA, the healthcare legislation prevails.

5. INFORMATION WE COLLECT

5.1 Personal Information

Identification Information:

- Full name and surname
- Identity number or passport number
- Date of birth
- Gender

- Contact details (phone numbers, email addresses, physical addresses)
- Emergency contact information
- Next of kin details

Medical Scheme/Insurance Information:

- Medical aid scheme name and membership number
- Principal member details (if you are a dependant)
- Medical insurance details
- Employer information (where relevant for medical schemes)

5.2 Health and Medical Information

Medical History:

- Past medical conditions and diagnoses
- Family medical history
- Surgical history
- Allergies and adverse reactions
- Current medications and treatments
- Immunization records

Clinical Information:

- Presenting symptoms and complaints
- Physical examination findings
- Clinical observations and notes
- Diagnosis and differential diagnoses
- Treatment plans and protocols
- Progress notes

Diagnostic Information:

- Laboratory test results (blood tests, urine tests, etc.)
- Imaging results (X-rays, ultrasounds, CT scans, MRI)

- Pathology reports
- Specialist reports and referrals
- Genetic test results (where applicable)

Prescription Information:

- Medications prescribed
- Dosage and administration instructions
- Prescription history
- Drug interaction records
- Pharmacy details

Administrative Health Information:

- Appointment history
- Medical certificates
- Sick leave certificates
- Insurance claim documentation
- Consent forms

5.3 Financial Information

- Billing information
- Payment records and receipts
- Outstanding account information
- Banking details (for refunds or direct debits)
- Credit check information (where applicable)

5.4 Communication Records

- Email correspondence
- WhatsApp messages
- Phone call logs
- Patient portal communications

- Appointment confirmations and reminders

5.5 Website and Technical Information

- IP address
- Browser type and version
- Device information
- Pages visited on our website
- Time and date of visits
- Referring website addresses
- Cookie data

6. HOW WE COLLECT YOUR INFORMATION

6.1 Directly From You

In-Person:

- During consultations and examinations
- When completing registration forms
- When providing consent for treatment
- During telephone conversations

Electronically:

- Through our website contact forms
- Via email communications
- Through WhatsApp messaging
- Via our patient portal (where applicable)

6.2 From Third Parties

Healthcare Providers:

- Referring doctors and specialists
- Pathology laboratories

- Radiology and imaging centers
- Pharmacies
- Hospitals and other healthcare facilities

Medical Schemes and Insurers:

- Medical aid claim information
- Benefit verification
- Pre-authorization responses

Other Sources:

- Emergency contacts (in emergency situations)
- Legal guardians (for minors or incapacitated patients)
- Authorized representatives

6.3 Automatically

Website Cookies:

- Usage patterns on our website
- Preferences and settings
- Analytics data

Electronic Systems:

- Appointment booking system logs
- Email delivery confirmations
- System access logs

7. WHY WE PROCESS YOUR INFORMATION

7.1 Primary Purpose: Healthcare Delivery

The primary purpose of processing your personal and health information is to:

- Provide you with quality healthcare services
- Diagnose and treat medical conditions

- Monitor your health and treatment progress
- Ensure continuity of care
- Maintain accurate medical records

7.2 Secondary Purposes

Administrative:

- Schedule and manage appointments
- Send appointment reminders
- Process billing and payments
- Manage medical scheme claims

Legal and Regulatory:

- Comply with legal obligations
- Respond to legal requests and court orders
- Report notifiable diseases to health authorities
- Maintain records as required by law

Communication:

- Respond to your inquiries
- Provide test results
- Send health-related information
- Emergency communications

Quality Improvement:

- Improve our services
- Conduct clinical audits
- Staff training (using anonymized data)
- Research (with specific consent)

8. HOW WE USE YOUR INFORMATION

8.1 Treatment and Care

- Evaluating, diagnosing, and treating your medical condition
- Prescribing medications and treatments
- Ordering and interpreting diagnostic tests
- Referring you to specialists when necessary
- Coordinating care with other healthcare providers
- Monitoring treatment outcomes
- Providing follow-up care

8.2 Billing and Payment

- Generating invoices for services rendered
- Submitting claims to medical schemes
- Processing payments
- Managing outstanding accounts
- Engaging debt collection services (where necessary)
- Verifying medical aid benefits

8.3 Communication with You

- Sending appointment confirmations and reminders
- Providing test results
- Sending health education materials
- Responding to your queries
- Notifying you of practice updates or closures
- Emergency notifications

8.4 Legal and Compliance

- Complying with HPCSA regulations
- Responding to legal requests (subpoenas, court orders)
- Reporting notifiable diseases to the Department of Health

- Maintaining records as required by law
- Defending legal claims
- Conducting internal audits

8.5 Practice Management

- Managing appointments and schedules
- Quality assurance and improvement
- Staff training (using de-identified data)
- System maintenance and security
- Business planning and operations

9. LEGAL BASIS FOR PROCESSING

9.1 Consent

In most cases, we process your information with your **explicit consent**, which you provide when:

- Signing our Patient Agreement
- Consenting to specific treatments
- Authorizing disclosure to third parties
- Agreeing to direct marketing (opt-in)

You have the right to withdraw consent at any time by notifying us in writing.

9.2 Contractual Necessity

We process your information to fulfill our **contractual obligations** to you as our patient, including:

- Providing agreed healthcare services
- Processing billing and payments
- Managing appointments

9.3 Legal Obligations

We process certain information to comply with **legal requirements**, such as:

- National Health Act obligations
- HPCSA regulations
- Tax and financial reporting
- Employment law (for staff records)
- Reporting notifiable diseases

9.4 Legitimate Interests

We may process information based on our **legitimate interests**, such as:

- Debt collection for unpaid accounts
- Defending legal claims
- Preventing fraud
- Ensuring practice security
- Business continuity planning

We always balance our legitimate interests against your rights and freedoms.

9.5 Vital Interests

In **emergency situations**, we may process information to protect your vital interests or those of another person, such as:

- Emergency medical treatment
- Life-threatening situations
- Unconscious or incapacitated patients

10. WHO WE SHARE YOUR INFORMATION WITH

10.1 Healthcare Providers

We share your information with:

- Specialists to whom we refer you
- Pathology laboratories for diagnostic testing

- Radiology and imaging centers
- Pharmacies for prescription fulfillment
- Hospitals (for admissions, procedures, or emergency care)
- Allied health professionals (physiotherapists, dieticians, etc.)
- Covering or locum doctors

Purpose: To ensure continuity and quality of care

Legal Basis: Your consent, contractual necessity, and healthcare legislation

10.2 Medical Schemes and Insurers

We share your information with:

- Your medical aid scheme
- Medical scheme administrators
- Insurance companies (for claims processing)

Information Shared:

- Diagnosis codes (ICD-10)
- Procedure codes
- Treatment details
- Billing information

Important: Medical schemes may share information with the principal member of the scheme. If you are a dependant and wish to keep information confidential, you must pay privately.

10.3 Third-Party Service Providers

Technology Providers:

- HealthOne Direct (medical records system)
- Elixir Live (practice management and billing)
- HealthBridge (medical aid claim submissions)
- Email and communication platforms

- Website hosting providers

Administrative Services:

- Debt collection agencies (for outstanding accounts)
- Legal advisors (where necessary)
- Accountants and auditors
- IT support and maintenance providers

All third-party service providers are contractually obligated to:

- Protect your information
- Use it only for specified purposes
- Comply with POPIA requirements

10.4 Legal and Regulatory Bodies

We may share information with:

- Courts (in response to court orders or subpoenas)
- South African Police Service (where required by law)
- Department of Health (for notifiable diseases)
- Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)
- Information Regulator (for compliance purposes)
- National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD)

Legal Basis: Legal obligation or court order

10.5 Emergency Situations

In emergencies, we may share information with:

- Emergency medical services
- Next of kin or emergency contacts
- Hospital emergency departments

Purpose: To protect your life or health

10.6 We Do NOT Share Information With:

- Marketing companies (without your explicit consent)
- Unrelated third parties
- Social media platforms
- Data brokers
- Any party for purposes other than those specified in this policy

11. YOUR RIGHTS AS A DATA SUBJECT

11.1 Right to Access

You have the right to:

- Request confirmation of what personal information we hold about you
- Receive a copy of your personal information
- Access your medical records

How to Exercise: Submit a formal request to our Information Officer using the PAIA Form C (available on our website or at our practice)

Timeframe: We will respond within 30 days

Fees: May apply for copying and administrative costs

11.2 Right to Correction

You have the right to:

- Request correction of inaccurate information
- Request completion of incomplete information
- Update your contact details

How to Exercise: Email info@eqhmedical.co.za or notify us during your consultation

Timeframe: We will correct information within 10 working days

Important: Medical records are legal documents. We may add corrections or addendums rather than altering original entries.

11.3 Right to Deletion (Right to be Forgotten)

You have the right to request deletion of your information when:

- The information is no longer necessary for the purpose it was collected
- You withdraw consent (where consent was the basis for processing)
- You object to processing and there are no overriding legitimate grounds
- The information was unlawfully processed

Limitations: We may retain information where:

- Required by law (medical records must be kept for 7 years minimum)
- Necessary for legal claims or defense
- Required for public health purposes

How to Exercise: Submit a written request to our Information Officer

11.4 Right to Object

You have the right to object to processing of your information for:

- Direct marketing (absolutely - we will stop immediately)
- Processing based on legitimate interests (we will assess your objection)
- Research purposes (we will cease using your data)

How to Exercise: Email info@eqhmedical.co.za or click "unsubscribe" in marketing emails

11.5 Right to Restrict Processing

You have the right to request restriction of processing when:

- You contest the accuracy of the information
- Processing is unlawful but you don't want deletion
- We no longer need the information but you need it for legal claims
- You have objected to processing pending verification

How to Exercise: Submit a written request to our Information Officer

11.6 Right to Data Portability

You have the right to:

- Receive your personal information in a structured, commonly used format
- Transmit this information to another healthcare provider

How to Exercise: Request your medical records in electronic format (PDF or other)

Fees: May apply for copying and administrative costs

11.7 Right to Withdraw Consent

You have the right to:

- Withdraw consent at any time
- Not be penalized for withdrawing consent

Important: Withdrawal of consent may affect our ability to provide certain services

How to Exercise: Email info@eqhmedical.co.za in writing

11.8 Right to Lodge a Complaint

You have the right to lodge a complaint with:

Information Regulator:

Physical Address: JD House, 27 Stiemens Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001

Telephone: 010 023 5200

Email: complaints.IR@justice.gov.za

Website: www.inforegulator.org.za

You may also complain to:

- The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)
- The South African Human Rights Commission

12. HOW WE PROTECT YOUR INFORMATION

12.1 Technical Security Measures

Access Controls:

- All systems require individual password authentication
- No automatic password insertion - manual entry required each time
- Mandatory logout when leaving workstations

- Multi-factor authentication where available
- Role-based access controls (staff only access information needed for their role)

System Security:

- HealthOne Direct: Cloud-based, secure system with encryption
- Elixir Live: Password-protected practice management system
- HealthBridge: Secure medical aid submission portal
- All systems undergo regular security updates and patches

Data Encryption:

- Patient documents are password-protected
- Email communications use encryption where possible
- Secure transmission protocols for all electronic communications

Network Security:

- Firewall protection
- Anti-virus and anti-malware software
- Regular security monitoring and threat detection
- Secure Wi-Fi networks with strong encryption

12.2 Physical Security Measures

Premises Security:

- Controlled access to practice premises
- Security systems and surveillance
- Locked filing cabinets for physical records
- Secure document disposal (shredding)

Workstation Security:

- Screens positioned to prevent unauthorized viewing
- Privacy screens on computers in public areas
- Clean desk policy

- Secure disposal of printed materials

12.3 Administrative Security Measures

Staff Training:

- All staff receive POPIA and confidentiality training
- Regular updates on privacy obligations
- Clear policies and procedures
- Confidentiality agreements signed by all staff

Access Management:

- Defined access levels based on role:
 - **Medical staff:** Full access to patient information and records
 - **Administrative staff:** Limited access for patient identification and document management
 - **Billing staff:** Access to billing systems and basic patient identification
 - **Information Officer:** Full system access
 - **IT Administrator:** Technical access for maintenance and security

Audit and Monitoring:

- Regular audits of access logs
- Monitoring of unusual access patterns
- Investigation of suspected breaches
- Incident response procedures

12.4 Data Backup and Recovery

Backup Systems:

- Primary servers located in secure facilities in South Africa
- Duplicate backup servers maintained overseas
- Regular automated backups
- Tested recovery procedures

Data Integrity:

- Regular data integrity checks
- Version control systems
- Audit trails for changes to records

12.5 Third-Party Security

All third-party service providers must:

- Sign data processing agreements
- Implement appropriate security measures
- Comply with POPIA requirements
- Report any security incidents immediately
- Allow security audits

13. HOW LONG WE KEEP YOUR INFORMATION

13.1 Medical Records

Retention Period: Indefinite retention on secure cloud servers

Legal Requirement: Minimum 7 years after last consultation (HPCSA requirement)

Children's Records: Until the patient reaches 21 years of age (whichever is longer)

Rationale: Medical records have long-term clinical and legal value and may be needed for:

- Continuity of care over your lifetime
- Legal claims (which may arise years after treatment)
- Medical research and public health purposes

13.2 Financial Records

Retention Period: 7 years (South African Revenue Service requirement)

Includes:

- Invoices and billing records

- Payment records
- Tax-related documentation
- Bank statements

13.3 Communication Records

Email and WhatsApp: Retained indefinitely as part of patient communication history

Appointment Records: Retained indefinitely as part of administrative history

Phone Logs: Retained for 1 year

13.4 Employee Records

Retention Period: 5 years after termination of employment

Legal Requirement: Labour Relations Act and other employment legislation

13.5 Other Records

Type	Retention Period	Legal Basis
Consent forms	Indefinitely	Part of medical record
Marketing opt-ins	Until consent withdrawn	POPIA requirement
Website analytics	2 years	Business need
CCTV footage	30 days	Security purposes
Audit logs	5 years	Compliance

13.6 Deletion Procedures

When information reaches the end of its retention period and is no longer needed:

- Electronic records are securely deleted and overwritten
- Physical records are shredded using cross-cut shredders
- Backup copies are removed from all systems
- Deletion is documented in disposal logs

14. COOKIES AND WEBSITE TECHNOLOGIES

14.1 What Are Cookies?

Cookies are small text files placed on your device when you visit our website. They help us:

- Remember your preferences
- Understand how you use our website
- Improve your user experience
- Analyze website performance

14.2 Types of Cookies We Use

Essential Cookies:

- Required for website functionality
- Enable you to navigate the site and use features
- Cannot be disabled
- Examples: Session cookies, security cookies

Analytics Cookies:

- Help us understand how visitors use our website
- Collect anonymous information about pages visited, time spent, etc.
- Used to improve website performance
- Examples: Google Analytics

Functional Cookies:

- Remember your preferences and choices
- Provide enhanced features
- Examples: Language preferences, font size

Marketing Cookies (if applicable):

- Used to deliver relevant advertisements
- Track effectiveness of marketing campaigns
- Only used with your consent

14.3 Your Cookie Choices

You can control cookies through:

- **Browser Settings:** Most browsers allow you to refuse or delete cookies
- **Opt-Out Tools:** Google Analytics opt-out browser add-on
- **Cookie Consent Banner:** Manage preferences when you first visit our site

Important: Disabling essential cookies may affect website functionality

14.4 Third-Party Cookies

Our website may include content from third parties (e.g., embedded videos, social media buttons) that may set their own cookies. We do not control these cookies.

Third-party services we may use:

- Google Analytics
- Social media platforms (for sharing buttons)
- Video hosting platforms

We recommend reviewing the privacy policies of these third parties.

14.5 Do Not Track

Some browsers have a "Do Not Track" feature. Our website does not currently respond to Do Not Track signals.

15. INTERNATIONAL DATA TRANSFERS

15.1 Data Location

Primary Storage: All patient data is primarily stored on secure servers located in South Africa

Backup Storage: Duplicate backup servers are maintained overseas for disaster recovery purposes

15.2 Cross-Border Transfers

We may transfer your information outside of South Africa in the following circumstances:

Technology Providers:

- Some of our cloud service providers may store data on international servers
- All providers are required to implement POPIA-equivalent security measures

Medical Referrals:

- If you are referred to healthcare providers outside South Africa
- Only with your explicit consent

Legal Requirements:

- In response to international legal requests (court orders, mutual legal assistance treaties)

15.3 Safeguards for International Transfers

When transferring data internationally, we ensure:

- The recipient country has adequate data protection laws, OR
- We have a data processing agreement with POPIA-compliant safeguards, OR
- You have provided explicit consent for the transfer

POPIA Section 72 Compliance: We comply with the conditions for cross-border data transfers

16. CHILDREN'S PRIVACY

16.1 Children Under 18

Definition: Under South African law, anyone under 18 years of age is considered a minor

Parental Consent: We require parental or legal guardian consent to process personal information of children under 18, except where:

- The child is 12 years or older and consents to medical treatment independently (Children's Act)
- The child is 14 years or older and consents to HIV testing
- Emergency treatment is required

16.2 Confidentiality for Adolescents

In accordance with the Children's Act and HPCSA guidelines:

- Adolescents aged 12-17 may have confidential consultations
- We respect the adolescent's right to privacy
- Information may be withheld from parents in certain circumstances (e.g., reproductive health, substance abuse counseling)
- We encourage open communication with parents where appropriate

16.3 Information Shared with Parents

For children under 12:

- Full medical information is shared with parents/legal guardians
- Parents have full access rights to the child's records

For adolescents 12-17:

- We balance the child's right to privacy with parental rights
- Sensitive information may be withheld with the adolescent's consent
- Life-threatening situations override confidentiality

17. THIRD-PARTY LINKS

17.1 External Websites

Our website may contain links to third-party websites, such as:

- Medical information resources
- Specialist practices
- Pathology laboratories
- Medical scheme websites

Important: We are not responsible for the privacy practices of third-party websites

17.2 Your Responsibility

When you click on external links:

- You leave our website and this Privacy Policy no longer applies
- We recommend reviewing the privacy policies of third-party websites
- We do not control or endorse third-party content

18. CHANGES TO THIS PRIVACY POLICY

18.1 Updates and Revisions

We may update this Privacy Policy to reflect:

- Changes in legislation or regulations
- New technologies or systems
- Changes in our business practices
- Feedback from patients or regulators

18.2 How We Notify You

Material Changes:

- Notification via email
- Notice during your next consultation
- Prominent notice on our website

Minor Changes:

- Updated version posted on website
- "Last Updated" date revised

18.3 Your Continued Use

By continuing to use our services after we post changes, you accept the updated Privacy Policy. If you do not agree with changes, please contact us to discuss your concerns.

18.4 Version History

Current Version: 1.0

Effective Date: April 2026

Last Updated: April 2026

19. HOW TO CONTACT US

19.1 General Inquiries

Email: info@eqhmedical.co.za

Telephone: 010 500 7541

Physical Address: Unit 3, 67 Brahma Avenue, Lethabong, Modderfontein, Johannesburg, 1609

Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 09h00 to 17h00

19.2 Information Officer

For privacy-related matters, including:

- Requests for access to your information
- Requests for correction or deletion
- Privacy complaints
- Withdrawal of consent
- Questions about this Privacy Policy

Contact: info@eqhmedical.co.za

Subject Line: "Privacy Matter - Information Officer"

19.3 Response Times

- General inquiries: 2-3 working days
- Formal PAIA requests: 30 days (as required by law)
- Urgent matters: We will prioritize and respond as quickly as possible

20. COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

20.1 Internal Complaints

If you have a complaint about how we handle your personal information:

Step 1: Contact our Information Officer at info@eqhmedical.co.za

Step 2: We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days

Step 3: We will investigate and respond within 30 days

Step 4: If you are not satisfied, you may escalate to external bodies

20.2 External Complaints

Information Regulator (Primary Authority for POPIA):

- **Physical Address:** JD House, 27 Stiemens Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001
- **Postal Address:** P.O. Box 31533, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2017
- **Telephone:** 010 023 5200
- **Email:** complaints.IR@justice.gov.za
- **Website:** www.inforegulator.org.za

Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA):

- For complaints about medical ethics and professional conduct
- **Telephone:** 012 338 9300
- **Website:** www.hpcsa.co.za

South African Human Rights Commission:

- For general human rights violations
- **Telephone:** 011 877 3600
- **Email:** PAIA@sahrc.org.za

20.3 Legal Remedies

You have the right to:

- Approach the High Court for enforcement of your rights
- Seek damages for unlawful processing of your information
- Request an interdict to prevent further processing

20.4 Time Limits

- Information Regulator complaints: Within 1 year of the incident
- HPCSA complaints: As per HPCSA regulations

- Court applications: As per court rules

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By using our services, you acknowledge that:

- You have read and understood this Privacy Policy
- You consent to the processing of your information as described
- You understand your rights as a data subject
- You know how to exercise those rights
- You understand how to contact us with privacy concerns

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PAIA Request Forms: Available at www.eqhmedical.co.za or at our practice

Information Regulator Resources: www.inforegulator.org.za

HPCSA Guidelines: www.hpcsa.co.za