

# Privacy Policy

## Dental Hygiene Guelph

Updated, January, 2019



Dental Hygiene Guelph

Privacy of personal information is an important principle to Dental Hygiene Guelph. As a Health Information Custodian, Dental Hygiene Guelph (28 Devere Drive, Guelph, ON N1G 2S9 / 519-993-5582 / smile@dentalhygieneguelph.ca) is committed to collecting, using and disclosing personal information responsibly and only to the extent necessary for the goods and services we provide. Our Contact Person (Privacy Officer), Charlane Stecjuk, RRDH (smile@dentalhygieneguelph.ca), is mandated to answer all inquiries about this Privacy Policy and respond to complaints regarding our compliance with information privacy legislation in accordance with Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). This document describes our privacy policies.

### WHAT IS PERSONAL INFORMATION?

Personal information is information about an identifiable individual. Personal information includes information that relates to their personal characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income, home address or phone number, ethnic background, family status), their health (e.g., health history, health conditions, health services received by them) or their activities and views (e.g., religion, politics, opinions expressed by an individual, an opinion or evaluation of an individual). Personal information is to be contrasted with business information (e.g., an individual's business address and telephone number), which is not protected by privacy legislation.

### WHO WE ARE:

Our organization, Dental Hygiene Guelph, includes at the time of writing one Dental Hygienist. We use a number of consultants and agencies that may, in the course of their duties, have limited access to the personal information we hold. These include computer consultants, office security and maintenance, bookkeepers and accountants, temporary workers to cover holidays, credit card companies, website managers, cleaners and lawyers. We restrict their access to any personal information we hold as much as is reasonably possible. We also have their assurance that they follow appropriate privacy principles.

### WE COLLECT PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Primary Purposes: Like all dental hygienists, we collect, use and disclose personal information in order to serve our clients.

*For our clients:* The primary purposes for collecting personal information are as follows: We collect information about your health history, your physical condition and function, and your social situation in order to help us assess what your dental health needs are, to advise you of your options and then to provide the health care you choose to have. A second primary purpose is to obtain a baseline of health and social information so that in providing ongoing health services we can identify changes that are occurring. It would be rare for us to collect such information without the client's express consent, but this might occur in an emergency (e.g., the client is unconscious) or where we believe the client would consent if asked and it is impractical to obtain consent (e.g., a family member passing a message on from our client and we have no reason to believe that the message is not genuine).

*For members of the general public:* Our primary purposes for collecting personal information are to provide notice of special events (e.g., a seminar or conference) or to make them aware of Dental Hygiene Guelph's services in general or our clinic in particular. For example, while we try to use work contact information where possible, we might collect home addresses, fax numbers and email addresses. We try to obtain consent before using any such personal information, but where this is not, for any reason, possible, we will upon request immediately remove any personal information from our distribution list.



*On our website:* We only collect, with the exception of cookies, the personal information you provide and only use that information for the purpose you gave it to us (e.g., to respond to your email message, to subscribe to our newsletter). Cookies are only used to help you navigate our website and are not used to monitor you.

*For people who are contracted to do work for us:* Our primary purpose for collecting personal information is to ensure we can contact them in the future (e.g., for new assignments) and for necessary work-related communication (e.g., sending out paycheques, yearend tax receipts). Examples of the type of personal information we collect for those purposes include home addresses and telephone numbers. It is rare for us to collect such information without prior consent, but it might happen in the case of a health emergency (e.g., a SARS outbreak) or to investigate a possible breach of law (e.g., if a theft were to occur in the clinic). If contract staff, volunteers or students wish a letter of reference or an evaluation, we will collect information about their work related performance and provide a report as authorized by them.

Related and Secondary Purposes: Like most organizations, we also collect, use and disclose information for purposes related to or secondary to our primary purposes. The most common examples of our related and secondary purposes are as follows:

- To invoice clients for goods or services that were not paid for at the time, to process credit card payments or to collect unpaid accounts.
- To advise clients that their product or service should be reviewed (e.g., to notify clients of their next scheduled appointment, to remind clients to book their next check-up).
- To advise clients and others of special events or opportunities (e.g., a seminar, development of a new service, arrival of a new product) that we have available.

Our clinic reviews client and other files for the purpose of ensuring that we provide high quality services. In addition, external consultants (e.g., auditors, lawyers, practice consultants, voluntary accreditation programs) may on our behalf do audits and continuing quality improvement reviews of our clinic, including reviewing client files. Dental Hygiene Guelph is regulated by the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario who may inspect our records and interview our staff as a part of their regulatory activities in the public interest. In addition, as professionals, we will report serious misconduct, incompetence or incapacity of other practitioners, whether they belong to other organizations or our own. Also, our organization believes that it should report information suggesting serious illegal behaviour to the authorities. External regulators have their own strict privacy obligations. Sometimes these reports include personal information about our clients, or other individuals, to support the concern (e.g., improper services). Also, like all organizations, various government agencies (e.g., Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Information and Privacy Commissioner, Human Rights Commission, etc.) have the authority to review our files and interview our staff as a part of their mandates. In these circumstances, we may consult with professionals (e.g., lawyers, accountants) who will investigate the matter and report back to us.

The cost of some goods/services provided by the organization to clients is paid for by third parties (e.g., Private insurance, Assistive Devices Program). These third-party payers often have your consent or legislative authority to direct us to collect and disclose to them certain information in order to demonstrate client entitlement to this funding.

Clients or other individuals we deal with may have questions about our goods or services after they have been received. We also provide ongoing services for many of our clients over a period of months or years for which our previous records are helpful. We retain our client information for a minimum of **ten** years after the last contact to enable us to respond to those questions and provide these services (College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario also requires us to retain our client records).



If the Dental Hygiene Guelph clinic or its assets were to be sold, the purchaser would want to conduct a “due diligence” review of the Clinic’s records to ensure that it is a viable business that has been honestly portrayed to the purchaser. This due diligence may involve some review of our accounting and service files. The purchaser would not be able to remove or record personal information. Before being provided access to the files, the purchaser must provide a written promise to keep all personal information confidential. Only reputable purchasers who have already agreed to buy the organization’s business or its assets would be provided access to personal information, and only for the purpose of completing their due diligence search prior to closing the purchase. You can choose not to be part of some of these related or secondary purposes (e.g., by declining to receive notice of special events or opportunities, by paying for your services in advance). We do not, however, have much choice about some of these related or secondary purposes (e.g., external regulation).

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**PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

We understand the importance of protecting personal information. For that reason, we have taken the following steps:

- Paper information is either under supervision or secured in a restricted area.
- Electronic hardware is either under supervision or secured in a locked or restricted area at all times. In addition, passwords are used on computers. All of our cell phones are digital, which signals are more difficult to intercept and password protected.
- Paper information is transmitted through sealed, addressed envelopes.
- Electronic information is transmitted either through a direct line or is anonymized or encrypted.
- Staff are trained to collect, use and disclose personal information only as necessary to fulfill their duties and in accordance with our privacy policy.
- External consultants and agencies with access to personal information must enter into privacy agreements with us.

Security Breach: If the privacy of your information has been compromised in any way, we will inform you as soon as possible via the contact information you have provided us.

**RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

We need to retain personal information for some time to ensure that we can answer any questions you might have about the services provided and for our own accountability to external regulatory bodies. However, we do not want to keep personal information too long in order to protect your privacy. We keep our client files for about 10 years passed the last entry for adults and 10 years past the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for minors. Our client and contact directories are much more difficult to systematically destroy, so we remove such information when we can if it does not appear that we will be contacting you again. However, if you ask, we will remove such contact information right away. We not keep any personal information relating to our general correspondence with people who are not our clients, newsletters, seminars and marketing activities.

We destroy paper files containing personal information by shredding. We destroy electronic information by deleting it and, when the hardware is discarded, we ensure that the hard drive is physically destroyed. Alternatively, we may send some or all of the client file to our client.

**CLIENT ACCESS RIGHTS AND CORRECTION OF PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION:**



With only a few exceptions, you have the right to see what personal information we hold about you. Often all you have to do is ask. We can help you identify what records we might have about you. We will also try to help you understand any information you do not understand (e.g., short forms, technical language, etc.). We will need to confirm your identity, if we do not know you, before providing you with this access. We reserve the right to charge a nominal fee for such requests. If there is a problem, we may ask you to put your request in writing. If we cannot give you access, we will tell you within 30 days if at all possible and tell you the reason, as best we can, as to why we cannot give you access. If you believe there is a mistake in the information, you have the right to ask for it to be corrected. This applies to factual information and not to any professional opinions we may have formed. We may ask you to provide documentation that our files are wrong. Where we agree that we made a mistake, we will make the correction and notify anyone to whom we sent this information. If we do not agree that we have made a mistake, we will still agree to include in our file a brief statement from you on the point and we will forward that statement to anyone else who received the earlier information.

**CONSENT PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTION, USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION:**  
During the first appointment, we provide each new client with our Privacy Policy and answer any questions or concerns they may have. Before collecting their personal and health information, each new client must read and sign our Health Information Consent Form. We also ask clients to sign a Consent To Disclose Health Information form when information has been requested by a third party.

#### DO YOU HAVE A CONCERN?

Our Contact Person (Privacy Officer) , Charlane Stecjuk, can be reached at [smile@dentalhygieneguelph.ca](mailto:smile@dentalhygieneguelph.ca) / 519-993-5582 / 28 Devere Drive, Guelph, ON N1G 2S9 to address any questions or concerns you might have. She is responsible for compliance with Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) regulations, communicating Dental Hygiene Guelph's privacy policy information to the general public. If you wish to make a formal complaint about our privacy practices, you may make it in writing to our Information Officer. She will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, ensure that it is investigated promptly and that you are provided with a formal decision and reasons in writing. However, if we cannot satisfy your concerns, you are entitled to complain to our regulatory body: College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (69 Bloor Street East, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M4W 1A9 / Telephone: 416-961-6234; Toll Free (Ontario): 1-800-268-2346; Fax Line: 416-961-6028 / Eva Rosenstock, *Manager, Complaints and Investigations*, Ext. 240 – [erosenstock@cdho.org](mailto:erosenstock@cdho.org)).

Under the provisions of the Personal Health Information Protection Act (Ontario) you may also address complaints to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario ([info@ipc.on.ca](mailto:info@ipc.on.ca) / 2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400 Toronto, ON M4W 1A8 / Toronto Area: 416-326-3333; Long distance: 1-800-387-0073; TDD/TTY: 416-325-7539; Fax: 416-325-9195)

This policy is made in compliance with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (Ontario) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada). These Acts provide additional exceptions to the privacy principles including some rare exceptions to the commitments set out above.

For more general inquiries, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Canada oversees the administration of the privacy legislation in the private sector. The Commissioner also acts as a kind of ombudsman for privacy disputes. The Information and Privacy Commissioner can be reached at: 112 KENT STREET | OTTAWA, ONTARIO | K1A 1H3 PHONE (613) 995-8210 | TOLL-FREE 1-800-282-1376 | FAX (613) 947-6850 | TTY (613) 992-9190