



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

EFFECTIVE DATE August 1, 2019

This Notice of Privacy Practices ("Notice") describes the privacy practices of Affordable Dentures® and Affordable Dentures & Implants® affiliated dental practices. A list of the dental practices covered by this Notice can be found at <https://www.affordabledentures.com/locations.html>.

Our commitment to your privacy

We understand that information about you and your health is very personal, and we are committed to protecting the privacy of this information. We create a record of the care and services you receive at our dental office. This record is necessary to provide you with high quality care and ensure we are in compliance with certain legal requirements.

This Notice will describe the ways in which we may use and disclose your protected health information, which consists of any information in our possession that would allow someone to identify you and learn something about your health. It does not apply to information that contains nothing that could reasonably be used to identify you.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice at any time. Any revision to this Notice will be applicable to all health information we already have about you, as well as any of your health information that we may receive, create, or maintain in the future. We will post a copy of our current Notice in a prominent location at our dental office. A copy of the current Notice in effect will also be available at the Front Desk area of our dental office and on our website. You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, please contact our Privacy Officer or the Privacy Office identified at the end of this Notice.

Our responsibilities

We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your health information and to provide you with this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. We are also required by law to comply with the terms of this Notice as currently in effect. We will not use or share your health information other than as described in this Notice without your prior written consent. We will promptly notify you in the event of a breach of any of your unsecured health information.

How we may use and disclose health information about you

This Notice describes the different reasons and ways in which we may use or disclose your health information. For each reason, we have written a brief explanation. We also provide some examples. These examples do not include all of the specific ways we may use or disclose your health information. But any time we use your health information, or disclose it to someone else, it will fit one of the reasons listed here.

1. **Treatment.** We may use your health information to provide you with treatment services. This means that our employees, staff, and others whose work is under our direct control, may read your health information to learn about your health condition and use it to make decisions about your care. For instance, a dentist may read your dental chart in order to care for you properly. We may also disclose your information to others who need it in order to provide you with medical treatment or services. For instance, we may send your doctor the results of an x-ray we perform.
2. **Payment.** We may use your health information, and disclose it to others, as necessary to obtain payment for the services we provide to you. For instance, an employee in our business office may use your health information to prepare a bill. And we may send that bill, and any health information it contains, to your insurance company. We may also disclose some of your health information to companies with whom we contract for payment-related services.
3. **Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose your health information for activities that are necessary to operate our dental practice. For example, we may use your health information to review our treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may combine your information with the information of other patients to plan what services we need to provide, expand, or reduce. We may also use your health information to notify you about our health-related products and services, to recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you, or to send you appointment reminders. We may disclose your health information as necessary to others who we contract with to provide administrative services. This includes our lawyers, auditors, management services providers, and consultants, for instance.

4. **Legal Requirement to Disclose Information.** We will disclose your health information when we are required by law to do so. This includes reporting information to government agencies that have the legal responsibility to monitor the health care system. For instance, we may be required to disclose your health information, and the information of others, if we are audited by Medicaid. We will also disclose your health information when we are required to do so by a court order or other judicial or administrative process.
5. **Public Health Activities.** We will disclose your health information when required to do so for public health purposes. This includes reporting certain diseases, births, deaths, and reactions to certain medications. It may also include notifying people who have been exposed to a disease.
6. **To Report Abuse.** We may disclose your health information when the information relates to a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. We will make this report only in accordance with laws that require or allow such reporting, or with your permission.
7. **Law Enforcement.** We may disclose your health information for law enforcement purposes if the information is: (1) in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process; (2) limited information to identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person; (3) about the victim of a crime even if, under certain very limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement; (4) about a death we believed may be the result of criminal conduct; (5) about criminal conduct on our premises; and (6) in an emergency to report a crime, the location of the crime or victims, or the identity, description or location of the person who committed the crime. We must also disclose your health information to a governmental agency investigating our compliance with privacy regulations.
8. **Specialized Purposes.** We may disclose the health information of members of the armed forces as authorized by military command authorities. We may also disclose the health information to the appropriate foreign military authority if you are a member of a foreign military. We may disclose your health information for a number of other specialized purposes. We will only disclose as much information as is necessary for the purpose. For instance, we may disclose your information to coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors; to organ procurement organizations (for organ, eye, or tissue donation); or for national security, intelligence, counter-intelligence and protection of the President, other authorized persons or foreign heads of state or to conduct special investigations. We also may disclose health information about an inmate to a correctional institution or to law enforcement officials, to provide the inmate with health care, to protect the health and safety of the inmate and others, and for the safety, administration, and maintenance of the correctional institution. We may also disclose your health information to your employer in limited circumstances for purposes of complying with workers' compensation and work site safety laws (OSHA, for instance).
9. **To Avert a Serious Threat.** We may disclose your health information if we decide that the disclosure is necessary to prevent serious harm to the public or to an individual. The disclosure will only be made to someone who is able to prevent or reduce the threat.
10. **Family and Friends / Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, your health information that directly relates to that person's involvement in your health care. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment. If a person has authority by law to make health care decisions for you, we will treat that person the same way we would treat you with respect to your health information.
11. **Research.** We may use or disclose your health information in connection with medical research activities approved by an institutional review board or privacy board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your information.
12. **Business Associates.** We may share your health information with another company that performs business services for us such as management companies. If so, we will have a written contract to ensure that this company also protects the privacy of your health information.
13. **Emergencies.** We may use or disclose your health information if you need emergency treatment or if we are required by law to treat you but are unable to obtain your written authorization. If this happens, we will try to obtain your written authorization as soon as we reasonably can after we treat you.
14. **Lawsuits and Disputes.** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose your health information in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose health information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process instituted by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made, either by the requesting party or us, to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.
15. **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose your health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections and licensure actions. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs and compliance with civil rights laws.
16. **Data Breach Notification Purposes.** We may use or disclose your personal health information to provide legally required notices of unauthorized access to or disclosure of your personal health information.
17. **Disaster Relief.** We may disclose your health information to disaster relief organizations that seek your health information to coordinate your care, or notify family and friends of your location or condition in a disaster. We will provide you with an opportunity to agree or object to such a disclosure whenever we practically can do so.

18. Uses and Disclosures if You are Deceased. Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, who were involved in your care of payment for health care prior to your death, your health information that is relevant to that person's involvement.

Your Written Authorization is Required for Other Uses and Disclosures.

Your authorization is required, with a few exceptions, for uses and disclosures of your health information for marketing purposes and for the sale of your health information. Other uses and disclosures of your health information not covered by this Notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your prior written authorization. If you do give us an authorization, you may revoke it at any time by submitting a written revocation to the Privacy Office noted below or our Privacy Officer and we will no longer disclose Protected Health Information under the authorization. But, the disclosure that we made in reliance on your authorization before you revoked it will not be affected by the revocation.

Your Health Information Rights.

Although your dental record is the physical property of our dental practice, you have certain rights with respect to your health information as described below. If you wish to exercise your rights, you may write directly to the Privacy Office at the address stated at the end of this Notice.

1. Right to request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information. You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the health information we use and/or disclose about you for treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we limit the information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care. For instance, you can request that we refrain from disclosing information about a procedure that you had or a treatment you were given.

Generally, we are not required to agree to your request except in the case where the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations, and the information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you, or a person on your behalf (other than the health plan), has paid our practice in full. If we do agree, we will comply with your request so long as the information is not necessary to provide you with emergency care.

Your request must be in writing, delivered to the address provided above, and must include a description of the information you wish to limit, whether you want to limit the use, disclosure, or both, and to whom you want the limitations to apply.

2. Right to inspect and/or request a copy of your dental record. You have the right to inspect and/or receive copy any health information maintained about you that may be used to make decisions about your care. Typically, this will include your dental and billing records.

In order to inspect and/or receive a copy of your medical information, you must submit your request, in writing to our dental practice in care of the Privacy Office at the address noted below. We may charge a reasonable cost-based fee for the cost of supplies and labor of copying, and for postage if you want copies mailed to you.

In very limited circumstances, we may deny your request to inspect and/or receive a copy of your dental information. However, if your request is denied, in some cases you may request that the denial be reviewed. Such reviews are performed by an independent licensed healthcare professional chosen by the owner of our dental practice. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

3. Right to an Electronic Copy of Electronic Medical Records. If your health information is maintained in an electronic format (known as an electronic medical record or an electronic health record), you have the right to request that an electronic copy of your record be given to you or transmitted to another individual or entity. We will make every effort to provide access to your health information in the form or format you request, if it is readily producible in such form or format. If the health information is not readily producible in the form or format you request your record will be provided in either our standard electronic format or if you do not want this form or format, a readable hard copy form. We may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for the labor associated with transmitting the electronic medical record.

4. Right to request an amendment to your dental record. If you believe the information we maintain about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may request that we amend the information. In order to request an amendment, you must submit a written request, as described above, indicating the specific information you wish to be amended and providing the reason supporting the request. Failure to put your request in writing or provide supporting reasoning is likely to result in a denial of your request. We may also deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- Is accurate and complete.
- Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect or receive a copy.
- Is not part of the medical information maintained by our dental practice.
- Was not created by us, unless the individual or organization that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment.

5. Right to request alternative communications. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain manner or at a certain location. For example, you may request that we limit our communications with you to contact at work or at home. Your request must be in writing, as described above, and must specify the manner in which or the location at which you wish to be contacted. All reasonable requests will be accommodated.

6. Right to receive an accounting or a list of prior disclosures of your personal health information. You have the right to receive a written accounting of all disclosures of your protected health information that we have made within the six (6) year period immediately preceding the date on which the accounting is requested. You may request an accounting of disclosures for a period of time less than six (6) years from the date of the request. Such disclosures will include the date of each disclosure, the name and, if known, the address of the entity or person who received the information, a brief description of the information disclosed, and a brief statement of the purpose and basis of the disclosure or, in lieu of such statement, a copy of your written authorization or written request for disclosure pertaining to such information. We are not required to provide accountings of disclosures for the following purposes: (a) treatment, payment, and healthcare operations, (b) disclosures pursuant to your authorization, (c) disclosures to you, (d) for a facility directory or to persons involved in your care, (e) for national security or intelligence purposes, (f) to correctional institutions, and (g) with respect to disclosures occurring prior to April 14, 2003. We reserve our right to temporarily suspend your right to receive an accounting of disclosures to health oversight agencies or law enforcement officials, as required by law. We will provide the first accounting to you in any twelve (12) month period without charge, but will impose a reasonable cost-based fee for responding to each subsequent request for accounting within that same twelve (12) month period. All requests for an accounting shall be sent to directly to the Privacy Office at the address stated at the end of this Notice.

7. Right to Get Notice of a Breach. You have the right to be notified upon a breach of any of your unsecured health information.

8. Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice. You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this Notice at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this Notice. You may obtain a copy of this Notice at our website, www.AffordableDentures.com. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, please write to the Privacy Office at the address listed at the end of this Notice. Copies of the current Notice in effect will also be available at the Front Desk area.

Questions and Complaints

If you want more information about our privacy policies or have questions or concerns, please speak with the Practice Owner at the dental practice or call or write to the Privacy Office noted at the end of this Notice.

If you are concerned that we may have violated any of your rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your dental information or in response to a request you made in accordance with your rights and the above instructions, you may complain to us in writing delivered to:

**Privacy Office
Affordable Dentures & Implants
629 Davis Drive
Suite 300
Morrisville, NC 27560**

Telephone: 1-800-DENTURE (1-800-336-8873)

You may also file a complaint directly with the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services at the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or the Secretary.

If you would like a copy of this Notice for your personal records, please ask for a copy at the Front Desk. We will also have copies generally available in the Front Desk area of our dental practice.