

## E-mail Communication

**Dr David Dowling**

MBBS (Qld), FRACGP | General Practitioner  
www.dowling.net.au



By agreeing to this "E-mail Communication Policy", You and Dr David Dowling, agree to the limitations of electronic communications, which include e-mails.

Good communication is essential in the doctor-patient relationship.

E-mail may supplement this relationship, however Dr Dowling is under no obligation to offer this service. Dr Dowling does not respond to e-mails from patients who are not registered with his practice, as no doctor-patient relationship exists, and this relationship can not be commenced over the internet.

Please remember the Warnings about e-mails

- E-mail – just like other messages – can go astray
- E-mail messages may be altered, or deleted, before Dr Dowling sees it.
- Think of e-mail as like a postcard going through Australia Post.  
Anybody can read e-mail on the internet
- Dr Dowling may not see the e-mail message straight away.  
It may in fact be a few days before a reply is written
- E-mails sent to you may be read by others who have access to your computer.
- The confidentiality of e-mail cannot be guaranteed,  
so you need to take care when using it to communicate.
- E-mail can be a useful tool to deal with simple requests.  
It is NOT for detailed and lengthy discussions.
- Please do not use e-mail for urgent matters.  
Telephone either the practice or the emergency services (000)  
if deemed to require an immediate response.
- Treat e-mails as official correspondence

If you think e-mail is a viable option for you, please remember these points above.

Remember! E-mail is not a substitute for a face-to-face consultation.

Dr Dowling urges you to make an appointment to see him

If you feel the matter needs more attention, or a situation changes.

Dr Dowling and you will need to agree on the rules for using e-mail.

Usually this can be discussed during a consultation, and a consent form completed.

If Dr Dowling receives an e-mail from a patient who has not signed a form, he may ask them to make an appointment to discuss the matter.

At present there is no MBS (Medicare) item available to cover the cost of receiving and replying to e-mails. Dr Dowling provides this as a free and limited service, however Dr Dowling may introduce a fee to cover further costs or expansion.

Dr Dowling can withdraw this service at anytime, without notice.

Remember! Other people may see your message.

Confine your email content to information you would be prepared to share over the telephone.

If you acknowledge these risks, and Dr David Dowling has discussed this with you, You may print this page out and complete below.

Attention When sending e-mail to Dr Dowling

You need to agree and accept his Web Site Terms of Use Policy.

You understand that your doctor's practice will take all reasonable steps to keep my health information secure and private. I have read and understood the current e-mail policy.

You agree that you will only use email for non-urgent matters,

and to let the practice know if I move practices or change my email address.

Full name : \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

E-mail address : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Signed Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

