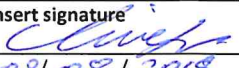




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Policy

Our practice's system for the follow up of tests, results and referrals has a strong focus on risk management.

Our practice team is adequately educated, trained and is cognisant of the procedures associated with:

- How clients are advised of the process for follow up of results
- The system by which pathology results, imaging reports, investigations reports, and clinical correspondence received by our practice is reviewed by a general practitioner, signed, acted upon in a timely manner and incorporated into the client's health record
- How we follow up and recall clients when we order important or clinically significant tests or investigations or initiate important referrals, and
- How we follow up and recall clients with clinically significant tests, results or correspondence.

All test results, including pathology results, diagnostic imaging and investigation reports, and clinical correspondence received are reviewed, initialled (or electronic equivalent) and, where appropriate, acted upon in a timely manner and incorporated into the client's health record.

The nature and extent of the practice's responsibility for following up test results, diagnostic imaging and investigation reports, and clinical correspondence/referrals depends on what is reasonable in the circumstance and the clinical significance of the test, referral or result.

Whether something requires follow up is determined by the:

- Probability that the client will be harmed if follow up does not occur
- Likely seriousness of the harm, and
- Burden of taking steps to avoid the risk of harm.

Important referrals for consultations or tests ordered are followed up by the referring practitioner (or delegated authority) in a timely manner. This may include checking that the client has attended the referred consultation or the expected investigation, that correspondence or test results have been received and reviewed, and that a record of any follow up and subsequent actions or recall process is incorporated into the client's health record.



Sometimes our general practitioners may need to be contacted outside our practice's normal opening hours by the pathology service about a serious or life-threatening result, and we have provisions for allowing this contact to occur (refer to **Section 5.10 – After-hours service**).

Our clients (or their carers) are made aware of their obligations and responsibilities for their own healthcare. This includes being informed about how to obtain their results and the seriousness of not attending for scheduled appointments/investigations and any recall or subsequent follow up. Where appropriate, this advice is documented in the client's health record.

Where a client indicates they do not intend to comply with a recommended test or referral, the client is deemed to have refused medical treatment or advice and is managed in accordance with **Section 4.41 – Management of a client refusing treatment or advice**.

In addition to an appreciation of the need for timeliness when following up and actioning referrals, tests and results our practice team members are aware of the need for confidentiality and discretion with regard to referrals, diagnostic tests and results or correspondence.