**Communicating by Email with Inverkeithing Medical Group**

**Advisory Leaflet for Patients**

1. **The Risks**

This leaflet is to provide you, as an Inverkeithing Medical Group Patient, with information about the risks of receiving and sending emails with us from your own email address. These e-mails could possibly contain sensitive medical information about you.

Once you have read and understood the risks described in this document, you should be able to make an informed decision on whether or not to use email to communicate with the Practice, especially if they contain personal information.

Emails from Inverkeithing Medical Group use Office 365 and while they are in transit within the Scottish NHS network they are secure from interception and hacking.

If an email is sent from the NHS network to you and you have an email like Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail etc it will enter the internet (otherwise known as the world wide web (www)) - emails are not 100% secure on the [WWW.](http://WWW/)

The risks to your personal information could be that:

* the information is intercepted and hacked;
* it is not delivered;
* is not delivered promptly;
* it is identified as spam and not put into your inbox;
  + the wrong email address is used and it is sent to another person in error (this is the most frequent risk);
  + the computer being used to access the email has a virus that allows access to the information provided;
* the internet email provider is hacked and the information is stolen;
  + the information is transferred outwith the UK to a country which does not have the same level of privacy laws;
  + Inverkeithing Medical Group will only use your personal information for the purposes of medical care, but if your information gets into the public domain there is a risk that it may be used for other purposes, such as direct marketing or identify theft.

If any of the above examples happen, it could have a serious impact on your privacy and potentially your ongoing health and wellbeing (e.g. you don't get a treatment you need because the email went to your spam folder and you didn't notice). If medical information about you is released into the public domain, it could cause embarrassment, invasion of your privacy and possible consequences regarding, for example, health or life insurance.

Inverkeithing Medical Group will try to take what steps it can to reduce these risks, however human error and technical glitches may make them ineffective.

# Consent

If you send us an email asking for medical information, we will take it you have consented to receive the information by return email.

You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time and no further e-mails will then be sent to you. To withdraw consent you should email the Practice.