

PRIVACY POLICY

PRIVACY POLICY FOR RUCKER DENTAL CARE

Effective Date: 6/21/2025

Last Updated: 6/21/2025

INTRODUCTION

This Privacy Policy describes how Patricia K. Rucker, D.D.S. and her affiliated dental practices ("Dr. Rucker," "we," "us," or "our") collect, use, protect, and disclose your personal information when you visit our website at ruckerdentalcare.com, use our services, or interact with our dental practices.

OUR DENTAL PRACTICES

Dr. Patricia K. Rucker owns and operates two dental practice locations:

Primary Practice - Rucker Dentistry, LLC

- **Location:** 406 Chesterfield Ave, Lancaster, SC 29720
- **Phone:** (803) 283-9969
- **Services:** Comprehensive dental care

Affiliated Practice - Smiles by Dr. Pat, LLC

- **Location:** 3191 Lancaster Hwy, Suite G, Richburg, SC 29729
- **Phone:** (803) 789-7321
- **Services:** Comprehensive dental care

Both practices are separate legal entities owned by Dr. Patricia K. Rucker, D.D.S., licensed to practice dentistry in South Carolina.

HIPAA NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This Privacy Policy is in addition to, and does not replace, our Notice of Privacy Practices for Protected Health Information (PHI) under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Our HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices governs how we use and disclose your protected health information in connection with treatment, payment, and healthcare operations at both practice locations. If there is a conflict between this Privacy Policy and our HIPAA Notice regarding PHI, the HIPAA Notice controls.

INFORMATION WE COLLECT

1. Personal Information You Provide

- Contact information (name, email, phone number, address)
- Appointment scheduling information for either practice location
- Insurance information and verification details
- Health information, medical history, and dental records
- Payment and billing information
- Communications with either office location
- Emergency contact information
- Referral source information

2. Website Usage Information

- IP address and browser information
- Pages visited and time spent on our website
- Referral sources and search terms used to find us
- Device information (mobile, tablet, desktop)
- Location data (for finding nearest office)
- Cookies and similar tracking technologies

3. Information from Third Parties

- Insurance verification and eligibility services
- Payment processors and financial institutions
- Appointment scheduling and practice management platforms
- Professional dental organizations and continuing education providers
- Dental laboratories and specialist referrals

HOW WE USE YOUR INFORMATION

We use your personal information for the following purposes across both practice locations:

Healthcare Operations:

- Providing dental care and treatment at either location
- Scheduling and confirming appointments
- Coordinating care between our practice locations
- Processing insurance claims and payments
- Maintaining medical records and treatment histories
- Quality improvement and patient safety initiatives
- Practice management and operational efficiency

Communication:

- Responding to inquiries and scheduling requests
- Sending appointment reminders and confirmations

- Providing treatment updates and post-care instructions
- Emergency communications and urgent care coordination
- Practice announcements and oral health education
- Referral communications with specialists

Business Operations:

- Managing patient transfers between our locations
- Coordinating care with dental specialists and laboratories
- Practice analytics and service improvement
- Staff training and quality assurance
- Compliance with professional and legal requirements

Legal and Administrative:

- Complying with state and federal legal obligations
- Protecting our rights, property, and patient safety
- Preventing fraud, abuse, and unauthorized access
- Business administration across both practice entities
- Regulatory compliance and professional licensing

HOW WE SHARE YOUR INFORMATION

We may share your personal information in the following circumstances:

Between Our Practice Locations:

- Patient care coordination between Lancaster and Richburg offices
- Shared administrative functions and practice management
- Consolidated billing and insurance processing
- Emergency care coverage and patient transfers

Healthcare Providers:

- Dental specialists, oral surgeons, and consultants
- Dental laboratories and imaging services
- Other healthcare providers involved in your care
- Hospital and emergency care facilities when necessary
- Insurance companies for coverage verification and claims

Service Providers:

- Appointment scheduling and practice management systems
- Payment processors and billing services
- IT service providers and data security companies
- Professional consultants (attorneys, accountants, practice consultants)

- Dental continuing education and professional development

Legal Requirements:

- Court orders, subpoenas, and legal proceedings
- Public health authorities and disease reporting
- Law enforcement when required by law
- Regulatory agencies (South Carolina Board of Dentistry, DEA)
- Emergency situations involving patient safety

DATA SECURITY

We implement comprehensive security measures to protect your personal information across both practice locations:

Technical Safeguards:

- Secure, encrypted data transmission (SSL/TLS)
- Password-protected and encrypted databases
- Secure cloud storage with access controls
- Regular security updates and patches
- Firewall protection and intrusion detection

Administrative Safeguards:

- HIPAA-compliant policies and procedures
- Limited access to personal information on need-to-know basis
- Regular staff training on privacy and security
- Designated Privacy and Security Officers
- Business Associate Agreements with service providers

Physical Safeguards:

- Secure facilities with controlled access
- Locked filing cabinets for physical records
- Secure disposal of confidential information
- Restricted computer and device access
- Surveillance and alarm systems

YOUR RIGHTS AND CHOICES

Under federal and state law, you have the right to:

Access and Control:

- Access and review your personal information and medical records
- Request corrections to inaccurate or incomplete information

- Request restrictions on use or disclosure of your information
- Request confidential communications and alternative contact methods
- Obtain copies of your dental records and treatment history

Privacy Rights:

- File complaints about privacy practices with either practice
- Receive an accounting of disclosures of your information
- Revoke authorizations for non-required uses
- Request transfer of records between our practice locations
- Opt-out of marketing communications

Contact Information for Privacy Requests: Primary Contact - Lancaster Office:

- Privacy Officer: Patricia K. Rucker, D.D.S.
- Phone: (803) 283-9969
- Email: [privacy email]
- Address: 406 Chesterfield Ave, Lancaster, SC 29720

Secondary Contact - Richburg Office:

- Phone: (803) 789-7321
- Address: 3191 Lancaster Hwy, Suite G, Richburg, SC 29729

WEBSITE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Cookies and Tracking: Our website uses cookies and similar technologies to:

- Remember your preferences and improve user experience
- Analyze website traffic and performance
- Provide location-based services to help you find our offices
- Enable appointment scheduling and contact forms

You can control cookies through your browser settings, but some website features may not function properly if disabled.

Third-Party Services:

- **Google Maps:** For office location and directions
- **Appointment Scheduling:** For online booking (if available)
- **Analytics:** For website performance monitoring
- **Social Media:** For practice updates and patient education

Online Forms: Information submitted through our website contact forms is transmitted securely and used only for the stated purposes. Forms may include appointment requests, contact inquiries, and patient communication.

Mobile Responsiveness: Our website is optimized for mobile devices. Location services may be used to help you find the nearest office location.

RETENTION OF INFORMATION

We retain personal information according to legal requirements and professional standards:

Medical Records:

- Active patients: Maintained for duration of treatment relationship
- Adult patients: Minimum 10 years after last treatment
- Minor patients: Until age 21 or 10 years, whichever is longer
- South Carolina law and dental practice standards apply

Business Records:

- Billing and payment records: 7 years for tax purposes
- Insurance claims: As required by payers and regulations
- Website analytics: 2-3 years for business analysis
- Marketing communications: Until opt-out requested

Electronic Data:

- Practice management systems: As required for patient care
- Backup systems: Maintained according to data retention policies
- Security logs: Minimum 6 years for HIPAA compliance

CHILDREN'S PRIVACY

We provide dental services to patients of all ages at both practice locations. For patients under 18:

- We obtain appropriate consent from parents or guardians
- Parents/guardians have access to their child's information
- We comply with additional privacy protections for minors
- Age-appropriate communication methods are used

CHANGES TO THIS PRIVACY POLICY

We may update this Privacy Policy periodically to reflect:

- Changes in our practices or services
- New legal requirements or regulations
- Technological updates or security enhancements
- Expansion or modification of our practice locations

We will notify you of material changes by:

- Posting the updated policy on our website
- Updating the "Last Updated" date
- Providing notice during your next appointment (if significant changes)
- Email notification for substantial policy changes

Your continued use of our services constitutes acceptance of the revised policy.

STATE-SPECIFIC PRIVACY RIGHTS

California Residents (CCPA/CPRA): If you are a California resident, you may have additional rights including:

- Right to know what personal information is collected
- Right to delete personal information
- Right to opt-out of sale of personal information
- Right to non-discrimination for exercising privacy rights

Other State Laws: We comply with applicable state privacy laws. Contact us for information about specific rights in your state.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about this Privacy Policy or our privacy practices:

Primary Contact: Rucker Dentistry, LLC Patricia K. Rucker, D.D.S. 406 Chesterfield Ave
Lancaster, SC 29720 Phone: (803) 283-9969 Email: [privacy email] Website:
ruckerdentalcare.com

Secondary Location: Smiles by Dr. Pat, LLC 3191 Lancaster Hwy, Suite G Richburg, SC
29729 Phone: (803) 789-7321

COMPLAINT PROCESS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with:

Our Privacy Officer:

- Contact information listed above
- No retaliation for filing complaints

External Agencies:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights
- South Carolina Board of Dentistry
- South Carolina Attorney General's Office (consumer protection)

Complaint Process:

1. Contact our Privacy Officer first
2. Provide details of your concern in writing
3. We will investigate and respond within 30 days
4. External complaints may be filed simultaneously

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