

THOMAS ORTHODONTICS

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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

Effective Date: November 29, 2025

I. OUR LEGAL DUTY

At Thomas Orthodontics, we are committed to protecting the privacy of your dental and health information. We are required by applicable federal and state law, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), to maintain the privacy of your "protected health information" (PHI). We are also required to give you this Notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your PHI. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect on the date listed above and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law. We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and make the new Notice available upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

II. USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations. For example:

Treatment: We may use or disclose your health information to a dentist, physician, or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you. This includes coordination with your general dentist regarding your orthodontic care, referrals to oral surgeons for extractions, or consultations with periodontists.

Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide to you. This includes submitting claims to your dental insurance plan, verifying insurance eligibility and coverage, and handling collections of outstanding balances.

Healthcare Operations: We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing, or credentialing activities.

Your Authorization: In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment, or healthcare operations, you may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

Specific Authorizations Required:

- **Marketing:** We must obtain your written authorization for any use or disclosure of PHI for marketing purposes, except if the communication is in the form of a face-to-face communication made by us to you, or is a promotional gift of nominal value. If we receive financial payment from a third party to send a marketing communication to you, your authorization will state that we are receiving such payment.
- **Sale of PHI:** We will not sell your health information without your specific written authorization. The authorization will disclose that we will receive remuneration for the disclosure.
- **Psychotherapy Notes:** While we do not typically maintain psychotherapy notes, if we were to do so, we would require your separate written authorization to use or disclose them.

To Your Family and Friends: We must disclose your health information to you, as described in the Patient Rights section of this Notice. We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend, or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, but only if you agree that we may do so.

Persons Involved in Care: We may use or disclose health information to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating) a family member, your personal representative, or another person responsible for your care, of your location, your general condition, or death. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health...[source](#) similar forms of health information.

Marketing Health-Related Services: We will not use your health information for marketing communications without your written authorization. However, we may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Fundraising: We may contact you to provide you with information about our sponsored activities, including fundraising programs, as permitted by applicable law. If you do not wish to receive such information from us, you may opt out of receiving the communications.

Required by Law: We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

Public Health and Safety: We may disclose your health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

National Security: We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials having lawful custody of protected health information of an inmate or patient under certain circumstances.

Appointment Reminders: We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards, or letters).

III. PATIENT RIGHTS

Access: You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so. You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies and staff time. If you request an alternative format, we will charge a cost-based fee for providing your health information in that format. If you request an electronic copy of your information that we maintain electronically, we will provide it in the electronic form and format you requested if it is readily producible; otherwise, we will provide it in a readable electronic form and format as agreed.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations, and certain other activities, for the last 6 years. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

Restriction: You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your health information. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency).

- **Exception for Self-Payment:** We **must** agree to your request to restrict disclosure of your health information to a health plan if the disclosure is for the purpose of carrying out payment or healthcare operations and is not otherwise required by law, and the information pertains solely to a healthcare item or service for which you (or someone other than the health plan) have paid our practice in full.

Alternative Communication: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to alternative locations. (You must make your request in writing.) Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation of how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request.

Amendment: You have the right to request that we amend your health information. (Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended.) We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

Electronic Notice: If you receive this Notice on our Web site or by electronic mail (e-mail), you are entitled to receive this Notice in written form.

Breach Notification: In the event of a breach of your unsecured protected health information, we will provide you with notification as required by law.

IV. QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may complain to us using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. You also may submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will provide you with the address to file your complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services upon request.

We support your right to the privacy of your health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Contact Officer: Dr. Brian W. Thomas

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