



OFFICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR OUR PATIENTS

Welcome To Our Practice!

Thank you for choosing us as your primary care provider. We are committed to providing you with quality health care. As part of our professional relationship, it is important that you have an understanding of our office policies.

OFFICE HOURS

Telephones are answered Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Our office staff will always assist you to the best of their abilities during office hours*. However, on clinic days, questions or messages will be answered end of the day or the following day, unless urgent. To help us better assist you, please provide us all information pertaining to your question or concern.

If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 immediately. For all non-urgent issues during after hours, please call the main office telephone number and leave a message.

* Office hours listed are with the exception of vacations or holiday office closures.

APPOINTMENTS

We are committed to providing quality care to our patients. To ensure timely continued care, we encourage patients to schedule follow up appointments at the time of check out as you'll have more appointment times open to choose from. If you miss your scheduled follow up appointment (cancellation or no-show), it is your responsibility to re-schedule on a later date.

To ensure quality care, the Physician does not treat patients she has not seen (i.e. we will not call in prescriptions or offer medical advice for patients prior to their initial office visit, or for whom we do not regularly see). Follow up visits are scheduled after all testing/labs have been completed, so that results may be reviewed together, and an effective and appropriate plan for your healthcare can be determined. Please note that test results will not be given over the phone.

While we strive to schedule appointments appropriately, emergencies can and do occur in Internal Medicine and the Physician will give her patients the time they require. For this reason, we kindly request your patience and understanding should a delay or rescheduling be necessary on your appointment date.

We accept walk-in patients subject to availability of Physician and an open slot in the schedule.

We encourage patients to bring their current medications to office to avoid any confusion.

CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations must be made at least 24 hours before scheduled appointment to be able to schedule and serve another patient needs. Please let us know in a timely manner if you are unable to make your appointment, and we will be happy to reschedule it for you at your convenience. If appointments are not cancelled in advance, a no-show fee will be added to your account.

No show* fees are assessed as follows:

- \$75 for new patient appointments
- \$35 for follow up appointment

* Please be advised that no-show charges are patient responsibility and will not be billed to your insurance company.

INSURANCE

Some of the medical insurances that we work with include Medicare, Aetna, Cigna, Humana, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Medicaid Traditional, Multiplan, United Healthcare, Coventry Healthcare, Care Improvement Plus, etc. If you do not see your insurance listed here or do not have insurance, please ask the medical staff for our self pay option.

Co-payments, co-insurance and/or deductible are due at the time of service.

It is the responsibility of the patient to ensure that we are a participating provider for your particular insurance plan. If we are not a participating provider for your plan, you may still select our office for your medical care, but "out of network" benefits will apply. In that case, patients will be responsible for the full cost of their visit on the day of service and may submit a receipt for reimbursement to their insurance plan.

As a courtesy to our patients, we are happy to file insurance claims on your behalf. Your health insurance contract is however, between you and your insurance company. Knowing your insurance benefits is your responsibility. Patients with questions about their coverage should contact their particular insurance carrier's customer service representatives. Below are some of the common patient responsibilities related to medical insurance.

- If your insurance company requires you to pick a Primary Care Physician (PCP), it is patient's responsibility to update our physician as your PCP on your insurance card.
- Inform our office of any changes in insurance coverage.
- If your insurance company needs you to supply certain information directly, comply with their request.
- Be aware that some or all of the services you receive may be non-covered or not considered necessary by your insurer. You must pay for these services in full.

PAYMENTS

We accept cash, checks and all major credit cards. It is understood, and agreed, that in the event an outstanding balance is not paid by your insurance company, you are personally responsible for the payment of all charges due. It is our policy to make all reasonable attempts to collect outstanding

patient balances should they accrue. Following these attempts, account in poor standing will be outsourced to a third party for the purposes of collection.

All accounts with a balance due over 60 days will be assessed a monthly service charge of \$25.

MEDICAL RECORDS

Per HIPPA guidelines, copies of medical records must be requested in writing. To ensure your privacy, a form for release of medical information must be completed prior to receipt of these material. To cover printing costs, a payment of \$10 is required for up to 20 pages. Additional pages will be charged at \$0.50 per page.

Legally medical offices have up to 30 days to complete requests for records. However, our staff put forth every effort to respond to these requests within days of receipt.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS AND PHARMACY INFORMATION

We strongly recommend using only one pharmacy for all your prescription needs. Please be sure pharmacists are aware of any possible drug allergies you may have.

If you need a prescription refill, please call your pharmacy and have them fax the request to our office at 281-398-7779. Please allow 5 business days for refill of standard prescription and up to 10 business days for mail order prescriptions. Our staff will, however, make every effort to respond to these requests within days of receipt. Changes and/or new prescription can only be completed by the Physician.

Please note that controlled substances cannot be refilled over the phone. These orders require office visit and a paper prescription signed by the Physician. Early refills will not be given. Patients will be required to sign a "Controlled Substances Prescribing Contract" which outlines the conditions under which the Physician is willing to prescribe controlled substances.

Patient may also be asked for drug and chemical dependency screening and appropriate psychological evaluation, as needed. If the conditions of the controlled substance contract are not met, the Physician reserves the right to terminate her relationship with the patient.

All after-hours requests for narcotics and controlled substances will be denied.

FORMS/LETTERS

We understand that at times, various forms or letters may be required to assist you with your healthcare needs. Our staff will be happy to complete forms and write medical letters as necessary upon your request. However, because this can be time consuming, fees for this service may apply. While these charges vary, they generally range from \$10-50 per form. Costs will be discussed ahead of time and prepayment is required. Please allow 10-14 business days for completion of requested forms/letters.

REFERRALS

Referrals to other physicians or diagnostic facilities can take up to 72 hours for our office to process. **Referrals will not be done after hours or on weekends. You are required to notify us at least 72 hours in advance of an appointment requiring a referral.** Failure to do so may result in your referral being denied by your insurance company and therefore making you responsible for any and all charges incurred at the specialist's office. Please remember that it is your responsibility to know which tests or specialists require the referral and request those in time.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS

Prior authorizations for non-emergent services such as MRI, or CT require 72 hours notice. Once you schedule a CT or MRI, you must let our office know so we can attempt prior authorization through your insurance company. If you do not give us proper notice or your insurance company denies the request and we must resubmit, you will need to reschedule the test.

TELEPHONE CONSULTATIONS

Our office charges for telephone consultations initiated by the patient. Fees are updated in conjunction with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services fee schedule updates.

It can be very difficult to recognize and treat illness over the telephone, and the best attention can be given to those making an appointment to see the Physician in person.

GROUND'S FOR TERMINATION OF PATIENT-PHYSICIAN RELATIONSHIP

A physician may terminate a relationship with a patient at any time by giving 30 days notice during which the physician is responsible only for responding to urgent medical matters. Physician will reserve this action for patients who demonstrate a lack of respect for themselves and the practice by repeatedly missing appointments, are not compliant with medications, tests or consultations required for effective medical treatment, failing to pay their bills, disregarding the stated policies of the practice, or acting in a way that is deceptive, dishonest or abusive.

PRIVACY POLICY

Please read and understand the patient privacy statement.

E-MAIL POLICY

We have an office e-mail address for communicating non-urgent questions, requests, and messages you may have for the Physician or office staff. Please keep in mind that email is not a substitute for personal visits for examination and counseling with your doctor.

Patients need to understand that the confidentiality of email exchanges cannot be guaranteed. While the security of email is still comparable to other forms of communication, there are some special conditions that apply to email.

Thank you for your cooperation in these matters. We strive to serve you better and the above policies will enhance our ability to do so.