

OFFICE POLICIES

HEALTHCARDS

You will be asked to present your Healthcard **at each visit**. You may be charged for your office visit if you do not present a valid Healthcard.

TELEPHONE AND MESSAGES

Please do not leave voicemail messages unless you are cancelling an appointment. Please call and speak directly with our staff during office hours. Due to high call volume, it is difficult for our staff to return messages immediately. It may take up to 3-5 business days to do so.

APPOINTMENTS

To ensure continuity of care, routine visits must be scheduled with your own family physician. For urgent (same day) appointments, if your doctor is not available, you may see one of the other physicians in the clinic.

We request minimum **24 hours' notice** should you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment.

Charges will apply for appointments cancelled without notice.

PRESCRIPTION RENEWALS

Your doctor will renew your prescriptions at each visit to meet your ongoing needs. Please anticipate your needs well in advance to reduce the need for telephone renewals.

If you are unable to arrange an appointment and require a prescription renewal, contact your pharmacy and they will fax us the information. Please allow up to 3 business days for your physician to respond to a prescription request from your pharmacy. Not all prescriptions should be renewed without an appointment; this is at the discretion of your physician.

Each time a prescription request is made by phone or fax without an office visit (virtual or in person), the following occurs: the patient's chart needs to be accessed and reviewed by a physician, proper documentation needs to be made and there needs to be communication between the physician and the pharmacy. Understandably, this takes time and resources. Please make sure you allow several business days' notice when requesting a prescription renewal by phone or fax. If you sign up for the [Annual Fee Plan](#), this service will be covered by the fee. Otherwise, there will be a \$20.00 charge for each prescription request made in this manner. This charge will also apply to any auto-faxed requests generated by your pharmacy. Please speak to your pharmacist should you wish to opt out of auto-fax renewals to avoid unwanted charges.

REFERRALS

If you need to see a specialist or undergo certain specialized testing, your doctor will send a referral request to the consultant directly from our office. You will be contacted by either the specialist's office or by our staff (by phone or email) to provide an appointment time.

If you have not received an appointment within 1 month of the consult request, please contact our clinic so that we may follow-up regarding the status of your referral.

If you are requesting a referral to see a specialist, please book an appointment to see or talk with your doctor. With very few exceptions, referrals cannot be made without an appointment.

Please call the office back ASAP when we call to give you the information regarding the referral appointment. If we email you the appointment details, please confirm receipt of the email.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

We are pleased to be providing patients with email communication services. Please read this Email Policy and complete our [Email Consent Form](#) to take advantage of this service. We must receive this consent form in order for us to communicate with you via email. It is not a secure means of communication and there are risks to confidentiality that we want you to understand.

We intend to use email communication for the following purposes:

1. Periodic updates such as the annual newsletter
2. Communicating specialist appointments
3. Sending Lab or Diagnostic Imaging requisitions for follow up investigations
4. Sending certain documents at the physician's discretion

Email will not be used to discuss or diagnose any medical issues or to book appointments. Please call our office for these issues.

If you are invited to email forms for your doctor to complete, depending on the nature of the forms, this may take up to 2 weeks.

Email should never be used for emergency problems. In the event of an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND LATE CANCELLATIONS

If you need to reschedule or cancel an appointment, we ask that you contact us to do so as soon as possible. We understand that there are times when you have to miss an appointment due to emergencies or obligations for work or family. However, when you are not able to call to cancel an appointment, this could prevent someone else from being seen by a provider of our health team. We sincerely ask for your understanding regarding the following late cancellation and missed appointment policy.

- All missed appointments without a 24 hour (1 business day) cancellation notice will be recorded in the patient chart.
- First missed appointment: Verbal notice
- Second missed appointment: Warning letter
- Third missed appointment: \$50 will be charged

UNINSURED SERVICES

An increasing number of medical procedures and most administrative services are not covered by OHIP. These services require time and resources to administer. Please see our website for which services are not covered by OHIP. For our patients who use these uninsured services, there are two ways by which you may want to address these fees. You may pay for each individual service as required, or pay an annual fee which will cover most of the uninsured services for a one year period. See our website for details as to which services are covered by our [Annual Fee Plan](#). Individual services must be paid in full when rendered. Forms, notes, and letters will not be sent to you until payment is received.

For your convenience, payment for uninsured services, including the [Annual Fee Plan](#), may be made on our website through our secure payment portal. Alternatively, cash or a cheque made out to the doctor who rendered the service (not the clinic) is accepted. We invite patients who have financial difficulties to speak with us about a reduction/exemption.

CHECKING TEST RESULTS

All test results that return to the office are reviewed by your physician. If additional follow-up or review is warranted, you will receive a call from the office to schedule a follow-up appointment. We do not routinely call patients regarding normal test results.

A NOTE ABOUT RESPECT - ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

We take it very seriously if a member of our staff or doctor is treated in an abusive, violent or threatening way. Safeguarding our staff is extremely important to us and we have a firm policy on abusive behaviour.

We support the government's 'zero tolerance' campaign for Health Service Staff. This states that clinicians and staff have a right to care for others without fear of being abused.

In order for our staff to maintain good relations with patients, we ask all our patients to read and take note of the types of behaviour that are unacceptable:

- Using bad language or swearing
- Any violence or suggestions of violence, including implied or direct threats.
- Verbal abuse towards the staff in any form including verbally insulting the staff
- Racial abuse and harassment will not be tolerated
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff will not be accepted. Requests will be met wherever possible and explanations given when they cannot

All our staff aim to be polite, helpful, and sensitive to all patients' individual needs and circumstances. Our staff work tirelessly behind the scenes, and we respectfully remind you that very often they could be confronted with a multitude of varying and sometimes difficult tasks and situations, all at the same time.

We all work tirelessly behind the scenes and do our utmost to provide you with the best care we possibly can. We ask that our staff be treated with respect and courtesy in all communications - whether that takes place over the phone, via email or in person. Any aggressive behaviour, verbal or physical, will not be tolerated and may result in the termination of the physician-patient relationship.