

# INTEGRATIVE HEALTH

## OFFICE POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR PATIENTS

Dear New Patient,

Welcome to our office! We look forward to becoming your partner in assessing and improving your health. Before your first visit, please take a few moments to read the enclosed letter explaining the policies and procedures of our functional medicine office.

Please allow 2 hours for your first visit, will be conducting a detailed consultation and evaluation.

**Please bring your completed questionnaire with any current exams and lab tests to your visit.**

The key to functional medicine is treating each person as an individual and getting to the root cause of health problems. That generally entails a detailed conversation about your current state of health, health history, family history, diet, lifestyle habits, etc. At that point, there will be a discussion of the potential approaches and recommended laboratory workups. This visit is primarily an information gathering and sharing session. The doctor may make some simple recommendations at this time, but most advice will be deferred until after lab and physical exam results are in and there has been time to thoughtfully consider your case. **Please be advised that you should arrive 30 minutes prior to you appointment in order to get all your paperwork in order.**

The second visit is generally scheduled (3) three to (4) four weeks later

How often you return to see the doctor? Depend on your individual treatment.

### FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS

- Please be sure to arrive 15 minutes before your appointment. This will enable us to sign you in and ensure your allotted time with the doctors.
- In order to help you with your path to wellness, we recommend every new patient to schedule a nutrition consult within a few days of your initial visit. This is an invaluable visit which will help you make positive lifestyle changes and understand how your supplement regimen and food choices have a great impact on your health and wellbeing. Making these changes can be difficult and challenging at first and this appointment can help you achieve your goals.
- Follow up appointments are scheduled 3-4 weeks after the first appointment. This is the time to discuss test results and to discuss your treatment plan and make any changes if necessary. The 3 visit process (i.e. the first initial visit, the nutritional consult, and the

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follow up visit) is the best way to get you on track with your protocol and to making a real difference in your health.

- Because of the complexity of most cases, treatment protocols may need frequent adjustments in the beginning. Therefore we may require monthly office visits in the first 4-6 months or more often as deemed necessary by your practitioner in order to facilitate wellness.
- **No results will be discussed over the phone. An office appointment or a phone appointment will need to be scheduled.**

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS

- Please cancel or reschedule your appointment 48 hours prior to your scheduled time. We do not double book. As your appointment time is set aside specifically to focus on your individual needs, it impacts our office if cancellations occur in less than 48 hours.
- One missed appointment is understandable in emergency situations, but more than one missed appointment will assume a \$75.00 missed appointment fee for follow up appointments.
- With repeatedly missed appointments, it may be difficult for us to continue care.

## LATE ARRIVALS

- If you arrive more than 10 minutes after your scheduled appointment time, it may be necessary to reschedule. However, the missed appointment fee will still apply.
- If you choose to keep your appointment, your visit time will be shortened accordingly.
- Please call us if you are running late.

## TELEPHONE AND SKYPE VISITS

- As a courtesy to those who are not able to come into the office we offer telephone and/or Skype appointments that are billed at the same rate as an office visit.

## COMMUNICATION AND PHONE POLICIES

- Because of HIPPA regulations we communicate only through our office telephones. We cannot and do not communicate via e-mail. Please be sure to call our office with any questions.
- It is inappropriate to call our doctors on their cell phones directly at any time.
- During office hours, please call the office and leave a message. Someone from the office will get back to you.
- On Holidays, week-ends, and after hours, please call the office and leave a message or send a short email with your phone number. Someone from the staff will call you back the next business day.

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- Phone calls pertaining directly to your recent visit which require 1-2 minutes will be answered. Please understand that often the schedule is full and non-emergency calls will be returned within 24 hours or the next business day.
- More complex discussions will require a follow up appointment. If needed, a phone or Skype appointment will be scheduled and will be billed at the same rate as an office visit

## PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

- At the time of your office visit, the practitioners will be giving you prescriptions with the appropriate number of refills to last you till your next follow up visit.
- Please make sure you have all the prescriptions you need before you leave the office.
- Prescription medications such as medications for blood pressure, diabetes, pain, and thyroid conditions need to be monitored closely. An office visit is required at a minimum every 3 months or as indicated by your physician to evaluate your care, order labs and approve additional refills.
- Failure to make and keep scheduled appointments will make it difficult to continue your care and will result in having refills denied.
- Absolutely, no prescriptions for antibiotics or other prescription medication will be called into the pharmacy. You will have to be seen in the office by one of our doctors.
- Refills of prescriptive medications require at least a 48 hour notification. Please ask your pharmacy to fax our office a refill request at (786-513-2617)
- If you have not been seen in our office within 3 months, prescriptions will not be refilled without a previous office visit with the doctor.

## LAB PROCEDURES AND RESULTS

- It is imperative that all lab work that has been agreed upon to be performed by you and the practitioner be completed within the time frame discussed. This ensures that the results are available for discussion during your next scheduled appointment and eliminates the need to reschedule as it may become difficult to accommodate your schedule needs.
- Because of the wide variety of testing and companies we use, the receipt of them can vary from several days to several weeks. Rest assured, once completed results are received, we will confirm your next appointment that should already have been scheduled at your last visit. Therefore it is not necessary to call the office to ascertain the receipt of tests performed. We routinely do not call you when they arrive unless the practitioners need to speak to you immediately.
- Allow two full weeks for the results to arrive at our facility.
- In order to ensure the best understanding of your lab results and to answer all of your questions, a follow-up appointment is required. Results will not be discussed over the phone.
- Our support staff is not allowed to discuss results over the phone.

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- We ask that you wait until your appointment to request a copy of your labs to avoid any confusion about the results.

## **FASTING AND LAB WORK**

- Fasting blood work requires that you have nothing by mouth after 10:00 PM besides water the night before.
- Water is the only thing allowed.
- Use of your prescription medications will not affect the test. Blood should be drawn by 8:00 AM to obtain the correct levels or as otherwise directed by the physician

## **NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS**

- Nutritional supplements can be refilled by calling our office prior to pick up, or can be shipped directly with a credit card payment. They can also be ordered online on our website.
- Please allow 3-5 business days from the time you order to the time you receive it.
- There is not a need for an office visit to refill nutritional supplements.
- In most cases you will need to continue on your current regimen until your next visit.
- Supplements cannot be returned after 30 days of purchase date.
- Only unopened supplements will be refunded at full price within 30 days of purchase.
- No refunds will be made in cash or back to your credit card. If a credit is necessary, it will be applied to your account to be used in the office towards other supplements or services.
- Supplements that are open and then stopped either by your physician or yourself for any reason cannot be returned.

## **AUTHORIZATIONS**

- Because we are non-participating providers, authorizations for prescription medications and specialized testing cannot be obtained through our office.
- This is the most important reason for maintaining a primary care relationship with a physician in your insurance network.
- In the event your insurance will not cover the ordered service, you can have your primary care physician rewrite the order which may generate different results.

## **AN EXPLANATION OF OUR FINANCIAL POLICY**

As doctors and staff, we are passionate about what we do, and we feel that we have a calling to provide the highest quality of Functional and Integrative health care. Just as our services are unique, our financial policies set us apart from mainstream medicine. We have prepared this handout to answer questions you or your family members may have about the rationale for our financial policies. If, after reading this, you still have questions, feel free to speak with our staff.

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## Why We Do Not Accept Insurance Assignment

Many people who have contacted our office for our services have asked us why we do not bill insurance directly when other medical providers do. We fully understand the financial challenge this presents to some patients, and we wish there were a way for us to bill your insurance company. Unfortunately, at this time, there is not. Here is why:

When clinics bill health insurance companies directly, the doctors are required to become participating providers. The doctors must sign a contract that allows the insurance company to determine which services they will and will not provide and how much they can charge for those services. In general, insurance companies are not focused on any preventive or wellness services. We are committed to the functional medicine model that addresses the underlying causes of your symptoms with specific nutritional and lifestyle recommendations.

## Why Our Doctors Must Charge for Your Follow-up Consultations

Some patients have asked why we charge for follow-up consultations regarding lab results and exams, as well as for telephone and Skype consultations, when other doctors do not. Our doctors' pay is based solely on the time and services they provide. Like all non-salaried professionals, including lawyers and accountants, our doctors must charge for their time so we can afford to provide you with care.

## INSURANCE CLAIM MANAGEMENT

- We are non-participating providers for all insurance companies including Medicare.
- We do not bill Medicare or any other insurance company.
- Because we have opted out of the Medicare program, Medicare does not allow reimbursement for any services rendered by our office.
- The only exception is certain specialized labs where the lab will bill Medicare directly.
- At the time of your visit, we will give you a receipt and an encounter form with appropriate codes which enables you to submit your claim to your insurance company directly. Please be sure to make additional copies for your records. Most insurance companies have a claim form on their website which you can download to attach to your receipt and encounter in order to seek reimbursement.
- Your insurance coverage is a contract between you and your insurance company. For this reason, we do not respond to requests or inquiries from insurance companies for office notes, lab results, and letters of medical necessity or claim appeals. Since we are non-participating providers with all insurance companies, our involvement generally results in denials and is therefore not beneficial in obtaining approval.

## PAYMENT POLICY

- Please be sure to check out with our financial coordinator after each visit.
- Payments are due in full at the times of service.

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I have read and understood the office policies

Print patient name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Office personnel signature: \_\_\_\_\_