



## *Atlantic Family Physicians*

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### Atlantic Family Physicians Office Policy

We would like to thank you for choosing Atlantic Family Physicians as your medical provider. We have written this document to keep you informed of our current office policies.

**Office Hours:** Our office is open Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm.

**Appointments:** We see patients by appointment only. Same day appointments are usually available for urgent or sudden illness.

**After hours and Emergencies:** For a serious medical emergency call 911 right away. If you are not sure and you call our office, please be sure to tell the person who answers the phone that this is an emergency. After hours you will reach our provider on call. If you leave a message please make certain to state the patients name, phone number and reason for the call.

**Urgent Need or Sudden Illness:** We have a limited number of same day or “walk-in” appointment available every day. Please call early in the day, as these spots fill up quickly. If there are no available appointments with your physicians, the receptionist will offer an appointment with the nurse practitioner or transfer you to the medical assistant who will discuss your needs with a physician and determine what you should do.

**Cancellations:** Please call within 24 hours if you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment. This allows us to provide that time slot to another patient. There is a \$25 fee for not calling to cancel and not showing up for your appointment.

**Running on time:** We know your schedule is busy and that your time is valuable. Please let us know if you have waited more than 15 minutes so we can double check to see if you have been properly checked in. Remember that we are running several different schedules. If someone who arrived after you is called before you, they may be seeing a different provider.

**Treatment of Minors:** Patient under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult or have written permission, for treatment, from a parent or guardian.

**Lab Work:** Some lab work we do in our office; like glucose test, urinalysis, protimes, hemoglobin A1C's. These tests are drawn by one of the medical assistants. Other lab work will be sent out to a reference lab. Usually this blood is drawn by the phlebotomist who is employed by the lab. In some situations, insurance company requirements dictate that we send out lab work we could otherwise do in our office. If you want your send-out lab work to be sent to a specific lab make sure you tell us every time.

**Labs Ordered by Other Physicians:** We do not routinely draw lab work which has been ordered by other physicians. However, we will fulfill this request if you are here for an appointment. If another physicians wants blood test, but cannot draw them in his/her office, please ask that physician for a form to take to the lab or your choice.

**Complete Physical Exams:** We believe that routine, annual complete physicals exams with screening lab test are very important to the maintenance of good health. However, insurance benefits vary. Some policies cover "wellness" and other cover visits when you have a complaint. Please learn about your benefits prior to your appointment so you will know what is covered by your insurance plan.

**Nurse or Medical Assistants:** We often refer to staff that assist our providers as "nurses". They definitely do help you and the doctors, and you probably think of them as nurses. But most of them are not technically "nurses" because they are not licensed by the state as an LPN or RN. Most are "Medical Assistants". This means they have technical school or on the job training in providing medical assistance to the physicians. They measure blood pressure, weigh you, ask you about your symptoms, and give injections, schedule test and call in prescriptions. They work under direct supervision of the doctor.

**Nurse Call:** What is a "nurse call"? This is what we say when someone comes in the office and asks for samples, wants to leave a form to be filled out, has a question, but doesn't have an appointment. The receptionist will ask you to sign in and notify the medical assistant that you are here. The medical assistant will come to talk with you as soon as she can. Remember that scheduled appointments take priority over walk-ins, so you may have a bit of a wait. We recommend that you call first.

**Speaking with a "Nurse":** To speak with a nurse you can choose that option from the auto-attendant or be transferred by the receptionist. Often at the time you call the nurse may be helping the doctor, so your call is answered by the voicemail, please leave a detailed message- including your full name and date of birth. The nurse will call you back; usually the same day.

**Test Results:** If you have diagnostic testing, i.e., lab, x-ray, echo, ultrasound, sleep study, please schedule a follow-up appointment, within 7-10 days, to go over the results with your physicians. You will be subject to your co-pay/co-insurance. **RESULTS WILL NOT BE GIVEN OVER THE PHONE.**

### **Prescriptions and Refills:**

- The best time to get a prescription refill is at your appointment. If you need to call for refills, don't wait until you run out. Most refills require doctor's approval. If your doctor is out for the day, it may be the next day (or Monday) before it can be authorized.
- Don't go to the pharmacy to wait for your prescription to be called in. Call them first to see if it its ready.
- Refill request called to us before 2:00p.m. will be handled by the end of the day, after 2:00p.m, it may be the next morning before your request can be addressed.
- Some medications have potential side effects that must be monitored. We require check-ups every 3 or 4 months for these medications. Be sure to keep those follow-up appointments.
- Some prescriptions cannot be called in. the prescription must be printed for you to pick up.
- Don't call after hours for prescription refills unless it is an emergent need.

**Samples:** We sometimes offer you samples to help you try out a new medication before you purchase it. Remember that samples are not for long term way to fill your prescription. We do not always have samples of your medication. Please do not rely on samples for medications you take long term.

**Narcotics:** We do not routinely prescribe narcotics for chronic use. We do not call in narcotic after hours. If you require use of narcotics, our physicians will refer you to a pain management specialist.

**Mail Order Prescriptions:** Many insurance plans offer financial incentives for using mail order pharmacies. We are glad to print out prescriptions for your pharmacy needs. You can pick these up at our office. We do not fax or call in mail orders, but we can send them electronically.

**Referrals:** Referrals are handled by our Referral Department. Sometimes this can be done the same day as your appointment and sometimes it can take 2-3 days, depending on your insurance and/or the urgency of your situation. Someone will contact you as soon as the referral authorization is obtained. As a patient, it is your responsibility to ensure your specialist is on your plan. It is also your responsibility to ensure your specialist receives your test results. You should pick-up a copy of your test results from our office and hand deliver them to your specialist. We will not fax test results and it is possible that the specialist will not see you without theses. Please understand that it can take a few weeks or months to get an appointment with a specialist. This is not something we have control over.

**Discharge:** If you are "discharged" from the practice it means you can no longer schedule appointments, get medications refills, or consider us to be your doctor. You have to find a doctor in another practice.

### **Common Reasons for Discharge**

- Failure to keep appointments, frequent no-shows. 3 consecutive no-shows will result in being discharged.
- Noncompliance, which means you won't follow physicians or nurse practitioner instructions about an important health issues
- Abusive to staff
- Failure to pay your bill
- Falsifying prescription
- Misuse of controlled prescriptions

Discharge process: We will send a letter to your last known address, via certified mail, notifying you that you are being discharged. If you have a medical emergency within 30 days of the date on this letter, we will see you. After that, you must find another doctor. We will forward a copy of your medical records to your new doctor after you let us know who it is and sign a release form.