

## Office Policies

### Touchstone Internal Medicine & Pediatrics



We would like to thank you for choosing Touchstone Internal Medicine & Pediatrics as your medical provider. We have written this policy to keep you informed of our current office policies.

<b>Office Hours:</b>	We are open Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, (lunch 12:30 -1:30 pm) Last routine appointment time is 4:30 pm
<b>Appointments:</b>	We see patients by appointment only. Same day appointments are usually available for urgent or sudden illness.
<b>After Hours and Emergencies:</b>	For a serious 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 it is an emergency. After hours you will reach our answering service. They will page the provider on call.
<b>Urgent Need or Sudden Illness:</b>	We have a limited number of same day or “work-in” appointments available every day. Please call early in the day, as these spots fill up quickly. If there are no available appointments with your physician, the receptionist will offer an appointment with the physician assistant or transfer you to the medical assistant who will discuss your needs with a physician and determine what you should do.
<b>Cancellations:</b>	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.
<b>Running on time:</b>	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 might be having blood drawn or seeing a different provider.
<b>Treatment of Minors:</b>	Patients under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult or have written permission, for treatment, from a parent or guardian.
<b>Lab Work:</b>	Some lab work we do in our office-like glucose tests, urinalysis, protimes, hemoglobin A1C's. These tests are drawn by one of the medical assistants. Other lab work we send 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, i.e., LabOne, make sure you tell us every time.
<b>Labs Ordered by Other Physicians:</b>	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 physician wants blood tests, but cannot draw them in his/her office, please ask that physician for a form to take to the lab of your choice.
<b>Complete Physical Exams:</b>	We believe that routine, annual complete physical exams with screening lab tests are very important to the maintenance of good health. However, insurance benefits vary. Some policies cover “wellness” and others 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.
<b>Nurse or Medical Assistant:</b>	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 take blood pressures, weigh you, ask about your symptoms, give injections, schedule tests and call in prescriptions. They work under the direct supervision of the doctor.
<b>Nurse Call:</b>	What is a “nurse call”? This is what we say when someone comes into 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 will 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.

<b>Speaking with a "Nurse":</b>	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 a date of birth. The nurse will call you back-usually the same day.
<b>Test Results:</b>	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 physician and you will be subject to your copay/coinsurance. Results will not be given over the phone.
<b>Prescriptions and Refills:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The best time to get a prescription refill is at your appointment.</li> <li>• If you need to call for refills, don't wait until you have run out. Most refills require the doctor's approval. If your doctor is out for the afternoon, it may be the next day (or Monday) before it can be authorized.</li> <li>• Don't go to the pharmacy to wait for your prescription to be called in. Call them first to see if it is ready.</li> <li>• Refill requests called to us before 2:00 p.m. will be handled by the end of the day. After 2:00 p.m., it may be the next morning before your request can be addressed.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Some prescriptions cannot be called in. The prescription must be printed for you to pick up.</li> <li>• Don't call after hours for prescription refills. There is no access to your chart and we may not be able to help you.</li> </ul>
<b>Samples:</b>	We sometimes offer you samples to help you try out a new medication before you purchase it. Remember that samples are not a long term way to fill your prescription. We do not always have samples of your medications. Please do not rely on samples for medications you take long term.
<b>Narcotics:</b>	We do not prescribe narcotics for chronic use. We do not call in narcotics after hours. If you require use of narcotics, our physicians will refer you to a pain management specialist.
<b>Mail Order Prescriptions:</b>	Many insurance plans offer financial incentives for using mail order pharmacies. We are glad to print out prescriptions for your mail order pharmacy needs. You can pick these up at our office. We do not fax or call in mail orders.
<b>Referrals:</b>	Referrals are handled by our Referral Department. Sometimes this can be done on 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 that 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 these. Please understand that it can sometimes take a few weeks to get an appointment with a specialist. This is not something we have control over.
<b>Dismissal:</b>	If you are "dismissed" from the practice it means you can no longer schedule appointments, get medication refills or consider us to be your doctor. You have to find a doctor in another practice.
<b><i>Common Reasons for Dismissal</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to keep appointments, frequent no-shows</li> <li>• Noncompliance, which means you won't follow physician instructions about an important health issue</li> <li>• Abusive to staff</li> <li>• Failure to pay your bill</li> </ul>
<b><i>Dismissal Process</i></b>	We will send a letter to your last known address, via certified mail, notifying you that you are being dismissed. 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 record to your new doctor after you let us know who it is and sign a release form.

**A COPY OF THIS FORM WILL BE PROVIDED AT YOUR REQUEST. PLEASE INFORM THE RECEPTIONIST.**

### ***Touchstone Internal Medicine & Pediatrics Financial Policies***

We would like to thank you for choosing Touchstone Internal Medicine & Pediatrics as your medical provider. We have written this policy to keep you informed of our current financial policies.

**No Insurance:** Payment will be due at the time of service. If you are unable to pay your balance in full, you will need to make prior arrangements with our Accounts Manager or a Customer Service Representative.

**Insurance:** Although we are contracted with several insurance companies, it is your responsibility to make sure that our physician is in your plan. It is also your responsibility to know your insurance benefits.

As a courtesy to our patients we will file primary insurance forms from our office. We do not file secondary insurance except for Medicare Recipients. In order to do this we will require information from you. We will need all your demographic and insurance information prior to your appointment. We will also request an update on this information approximately every six months thereafter. We ask that at the time of your appointment you bring your insurance card and a photo ID as well as any other forms that will assist in making sure that your claim is filed correctly.

At the time of service you will be responsible for all fees that are not covered by your insurance, including co-pays, co-insurance, deductibles and non-covered services or items received. The co-pay cannot be waived by our practice, as it is a requirement placed on you by your insurance carrier. We strive to be as accurate as possible in calculating your responsibility but, with so many variations in policies and fee schedules, we are not always exact. You may receive a statement from our office for any balance due. For your convenience we accept cash, checks, credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover), and money orders. Payments are also accepted by phone.

- Auto Accident:** If your injury is a result of an auto accident, you are required to pay for services and then collect from the auto carrier. We will not file your insurance but will provide you with a receipt to do so.
- Liability Injury:** If your injury is a result from another party's negligence, you are required to pay for services and then collect from the responsible party. We will not file your insurance but will provide you with a receipt to do so.
- Worker's Compensation:** If your injury is due to an accident in your work place, please inform the receptionist immediately. We are not authorized to treat you for this type of claim. You will need to contact your supervisor for instructions on how to file a worker's compensation claim. We regret any inconvenience this may cause.
- Return Checks:** Returned checks are handled through TeleCheck at 1-800-366-1054. There will be a charge assessed for any check returned by your bank for any reason.
- Disability, Insurance Forms, Attending Physician Statements, FMLA:** There will be a charge of \$25.00 for the completion of medical forms or you may be required to schedule an appointment. Payment is due at the time that you pick-up these forms. Please allow 7-10 days for the completion of these forms. If you would like the forms mailed to you or the insurance, payment will be due prior to mailing. FMLA forms require that you come in for an appointment.
- Medical Records:** We will provide you a copy of your medical records upon request and for a fee. You will need to sign a letter of release prior to having them copied. Please allow up to 30 days for this request to be processed.
- X-Rays:** We will provide you a copy of your x-rays upon request and for a fee. You will need to sign a letter of release at the time of pick-up. Please allow 48 hours from the time of your request.
- Lab Work:** A limited number of lab services will be billed by our office. All other services will be billed by the contracted lab. You may receive a bill from CPL, Quest Diagnostics, or LabOne. Please contact their billing department prior to calling our office. We do not have access to their billing information. If necessary call our office at 281-484-5587 x109.
- Billing:** If you receive a bill from us, it is because we believe the balance is your responsibility. Please contact your insurance company first, if you think there is a problem. If you have

**Collections:**

any questions about your bill, please call our billing department immediately. If you cannot pay your entire balance, please call to make payment arrangements. Accounts that are not paid within 30 days begin our in house collection process. If your balance becomes 65 days old, your doctor will be notified and you may be subject to dismissal from the practice.

**Acknowledgement**

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the **Touchstone Internal Medicine & Pediatrics Office and Financial Policies**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Patient or Guardian

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Date