

# NEW PATIENT INFORMATION

The providers and staff of Stonecreek Family Physicians are pleased to welcome you to our practice. Patient care is our number one priority. We look forward to serving your healthcare needs. This packet contains information that will help you understand how our office works to best serve you, as well as patient forms we need you to complete and bring to your first appointment.



## **OVERVIEW**

We have adopted standard operations, policies, and procedures to ensure that we are in compliance with federal and state regulations, and because it is extremely important to us that we operate in a manner that is consistent with our mission and values.

### **Stonecreek Family Physicians' Mission Statement**

Stonecreek Family Physicians is committed to providing high quality primary care to our patients in a Family Practice setting that recognizes the essential role of our employees and is adaptable to the individual provider's needs.

### **Stonecreek Family Physicians' Values Statement**

For our patients we emphasize:

- Continuity of care through a primary physician ("your family physician").
- Accessibility with a physician on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Advocacy for our patients in the sometimes confusing and complex medical system.
- Quality through up-to-date care as a result of continuing medical education, sub-specialty referral and monitoring of national practice care guidelines.



## WE ARE PLEASED TO SERVE YOU!

Thank you for trusting Stonecreek Family Physicians to handle your primary care needs.

Stay informed by visiting our website at [www.stoncreekfp.com](http://www.stoncreekfp.com).

Look for our quarterly patient newsletter on the website in January, April, July, and October!



### **PATIENT FORMS, PATIENT HANDOUTS, AND DOCUMENTATION REQUESTED**

Let's begin with the paperwork. The information you provide in your paperwork is of tremendous value when it comes to serving your needs properly. Whether it's understanding your medical history or knowing who to process insurance and bill payments with, having this information up-to-date and accurate is important.

#### **Patient Forms or Records**

See our website to find most of these forms.

*Medical History Form* - This form educates us on your health history. Please complete this form as thoroughly as possible.

*Patient Registration Form* - This form provides us with your demographics, billing information, and HIPAA authorization(s). Complete information is necessary for our office to be in compliance with healthcare regulations.

*Notice of Privacy Practices* - This handout is a regulatory requirement that explains how we will use and disclose your protected health information and your rights associated with the sharing of this information.

*Medical Records Release* - This form is used to request records from previous physicians who have cared for you. Having these records allows us to gain a complete understanding of your medical history and prevents duplication of studies/exams. These forms need to be completed in blue or black ink only and must include the name of the practice or office, the doctor's name, address of the practice or office, and if possible, the fax number where we can send the request.

*Immunization Records* - It is helpful to have a complete vaccination record on file for you as we manage your healthcare needs. If you do not have a copy of your shot record, we can request them with the completion of a Medical Records Release form.

*Medication List* - Providing a full list of the medications (including over the counter medications) you are taking to your physician is extremely important as we begin to manage your healthcare needs. This list will need to include: drug name, dosage, how often you take it, and the prescribing doctor's name. If you prefer, you can bring in the container/bottle the medication is in and we will create the list.

*Insurance Card* - In order to process a claim for the services we provide to you, we must have a current copy of your card on file. You will be asked to present your card(s) at each visit to ensure this information is up-to-date in our system.

*HIPAA Update Form* - When you are a new patient, we obtain your HIPAA authorization (a list of individuals who you authorize to have access to your health information) on your registration form. Each year, federal regulations

*Medicare Form* - Our office is required to have patients covered by Medicare answer the questions on this form at each visit for determining the billing obligations. We only ask you to do this to meet the Medicare requirement.



## **NOTABLE INFORMATION**

In this section, we will provide several pieces of general information to educate you on how our office works. We hope you find this to be useful as we develop your patient-physician relationship.

### **Appointments: 1<sup>st</sup> Appointment**

Please arrive 30 minutes early and bring the following with you to your first appointment:

- Medical History Form
- Financial Policy
- Insurance card(s)
- Immunization records - This is important as we will not be able to administer any shots without this information.
- Medication List
- Patient Registration Form (in most cases, this will be provided to you when you arrive for your appointment)

### **Appointments: Appointments are Required**

We are a clinic that operates on an appointment basis. Please do not walk-in and expect to be seen. If you are not able to wait to be seen by appointment or wait to speak to your physician's nurse for guidance, you should either be seen by one of the urgent care clinics in town or go to the hospital emergency room.

### **Appointments: Cancelling an Appointment**

Our office requires 24 hour notice for appointment cancellation. Should less than 24 hour notice be provided, the cancellation may be treated as a DNKA (see below). We understand that emergencies or unforeseen circumstance may keep you from providing notice and will be handled accordingly.

### **Appointments: Did Not Keep Appointment (DNKA)**

It is extremely important that you show up for your scheduled appointment with our office. Not showing for an appointment when we expect you or cancelling last minute has the following impact for patients.

- A missed opportunity for your health condition to be monitored and/or managed.
- A missed opportunity for another patient with healthcare needs who could have been seen during that time.

Stonecreek Family Physicians' cancellation policy requires that patients provide 24 hour notice.

Repeated DNKAs may result in the assessment of a \$50.00 fee and/or could result in dismissal from the practice.

### **Appointments: Arriving Late**

We ask that you arrive at least 10 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment time. Your appointment time is the time when your physician plans to see you in the exam room. We are a busy office and there are times when we have several patients checking in at once. Please make sure you arrive early enough to check-in with our front desk staff

and complete paperwork before your appointment time. Should you check-in after your appointment time, there is a chance that the physician will not be able to see you.

### **Appointments: Acute Needs**

We are fortunate to be able to schedule most acute needs on the same day. If your physician does not have an opening, we do have physician extenders (a.k.a. mid-levels) on staff each day to tend to patient needs. Our extenders include Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners who have worked for our physicians for several years.

During the winter cold/cough/flu season, same day appointments may be harder to schedule, but we do our best to get you in as quickly as possible.

### **Appointments: Scheduling Your Annual Physical or Routine Appointment**

Here are some tips if your physician has recommended that you have an annual physical or require routine appointments to monitor your health . . .

- If it has been nine (9) months or more since your last physical, it is time to call our office and schedule your next annual exam.
- If you are on a medication to treat a chronic condition, physicians will typically issue a prescription refill to last until your next required appointment time. Please call us to schedule your next appointment when you **begin the last refill** of your medication.

### **Appointments: Scheduling School and Sports Physicals**

Our office is busy with school and sports physicals summer through fall. In order to get your physicals completed before the deadline, please call ahead of time to schedule. Physical can be scheduled any time after May 1<sup>st</sup> for the following school year. We recommend calling in late spring or early summer to allow plenty of time for scheduling.

### **Hours of Operation**

Our office is open 7:30am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. Phone and office hours are 8:30am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. Our staff breaks for lunch from 12:30pm to 1:30pm. The front office and lab is open over lunch, while the majority of clinical and clerical staff is not available.

If you need to reach a medical provider outside of our hours of operation and phone hours, you may contact our answering service at 1-866-791-6546. They will have the physician on-call contact you to discuss your needs. If you have a medical emergency, you should dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

### **Hospital Care**

In the event that you are admitted to the hospital and are 18 years old or older, the hospitalists on staff will be responsible for your care. The hospitalists are specialized in caring for patients in the hospital setting and they have electronic access to your records here at Stonecreek. Our physicians are available to them should they need more information about your health history or condition. Newborns and patients under the age of 18 will be cared for by their Stonecreek physician in the hospital setting at Via Christi.

## BE INFORMED & KEEP READING

### **Lab Information**

Our office has a lab on site to process commonly ordered labs. Additional labs may be drawn and sent out to a reference lab for processing to address the healthcare needs of our patients.

Appointments - We prefer that you schedule an appointment whenever possible for lab work. Your physician's unit assistant or the lab receptionist can schedule appointments for you.

Kit Draws - Occasionally, lab work is requested that is processed elsewhere and requires a special kit for collecting and sending specimens. It is extremely important that the lab receive the draw kit at least 24 hours before performing the draw. This allows staff the time necessary to read the instructions and run any preparation required for the draw.

Outside Orders - Scheduling an appointment to have outside (from another office) lab orders run is welcomed. We discourage walk-ins, especially in these cases as we need to make sure we have all the information necessary to fill the order for you. Scheduling an appointment gives us the time necessary to prepare for your needs.

Results - Results will be sent to the ordering physician as soon as they are available. The time it takes to receive results depending on the test being ran. Results may be available the same day, while others may require a week or two. Tests that are sent out for processing require the most time to be completed. Your physician or nurse will notify you of your results. When processing outside orders, results will be sent to both the ordering physician and your primary care physician.

Standing Orders - Standing orders are lab orders that are to be run on a routine basis for a period of time. These repeat labs may be run weekly, monthly, and quarterly. If you have been instructed to have labs run on a routine basis, please notify the lab staff so that they know to save a copy of the orders.

Walk-in - As mentioned above, we prefer that you come in by appointment, but we will take walk-ins. You may have to wait until all scheduled patients are taken care of first.

### **Medications: Prescribing Medications**

Professional medical conduct and patient safety is of utmost importance when prescribing medications. Therefore, we have implemented the following guidelines:

- If you are prescribed a medication for treating a chronic disease (such as diabetes or high blood pressure), your physician may write a prescription at your visit with refills to last until your next appointment time.
- Requests for new medications, in most cases, require an office visit.

## REFILL POLICY

Stonecreek Family Physicians asks that you give us a 48-hour (two business days) notice to fulfill your refill needs.

Please take this into account with weekends and holidays.

This helps our staff process everyone's request in a timely manner.

Prescriptions given at an appointment will be filled that day.

## **Medications: Prescription Refills**

The following process has proven to be the most efficient and helps us meet your needs in a timely manner.

Whenever you have about one week of your medication remaining, please check your pill bottle first to ensure that refills are available. If you have refills remaining, you **must** call your pharmacy to fill your prescription. If you have refills, please use the automated pharmacy phone line. Please do not contact your physician if your prescription has refills remaining.

Anytime you are out of refills, **please call your pharmacy to speak to the pharmacist or pharmacy technician (not the automated pharmacy phone line) and tell him/her that you are out of refills.** The pharmacy will then contact your physician via fax or email with your refill request. Sometimes your physician has already ordered your medication (i.e. during your annual physical) and the prescription has been put “on hold” at the pharmacy. If you know for certain that your physician has already ordered the medication, tell your pharmacy that the prescriptions may have been filled.

Please visit your pharmacy, or come by our office if required to hand carry a prescription, **after noon on the 2<sup>nd</sup> business day.** Please note, depending on the type of medication you need, your pharmacy may require additional time to fill your request.

*Please allow our office 2 business days to meet your refill request.*

## **Patient Dismissal**

The physician/patient relationship is extremely important to your health and well-being. Should your physician determine that they are not the best fit for your healthcare needs, the physician may choose to dismiss you from the practice. Reasons why a patient may be dismissed include but are not limited to:

- Not cancelling or keeping a scheduled appointments
- Mistreatment of office and clinical staff
- Non-compliance, not following the professional advice of the physician in charge of your care

Note: Patients who miss a new patient appointment will not be accepted as a patient.

## **Payment for Services**

**Self-Pay:** If you are self-pay, meaning you have no insurance, payment is due at the time of services. Any balance outstanding on your account is also payable when you are seen in our office, unless prior arrangements have been made with our Business Office.

**Insurance:** At present, Stonecreek Family Physicians, LLP is *contracted* with the following health insurance providers: Blue Cross Blue Shield, Medicare, Medicaid (Kancare, Sunflower, and United Healthcare), Preferred Health Systems, Coventry, Century, and WPPA insurances. **Contracted** means we have an agreement with the specific insurance company to accept an allowed amount for covered services rendered.

ALL OTHER INSURANCES (insurances that we are not contracted with) are submitted as a courtesy to you for your insurance to process. **When we accept your insurance/insurance card, do not operate under the assumption that we have a contract with that insurance company.** Payment of services is based entirely on your

policy. If visits are not payable by your policy, Stonecreek Family Physicians LLP charges are your responsibility and due upon receipt.

If insurance has not paid your claim within 60 days, the amount due will become your responsibility to pay.

**Out-of-Pocket Expenses:** Out-of-Pocket expenses are the responsibility of the patient and are based on your individual policy. Deductibles and co-pays are examples out-of-pocket expenses. If you have insurance, your policy co-pay is due at the time of service. Any insurance we contract with requires us to collect these amounts at the time of service. Failing to collect these amounts is in violation of our contract with the insurance company and could have legal consequences. Please help us remain compliant by being prepared to make these payments at your visit.

Other out-of-pocket expenses can include a variation of charges and depends on your individual policy. Policies vary from person to person. Our office will assist you as best we can to help you understand the charges on your account and the results of insurance claims, but **it is your responsibility to know your policy**. Contact your insurance company anytime you have a question about what is your financial responsibility. Just because a charge is for a covered service, does not mean that insurance will pay for it.

**Covered vs. Non-Covered Services:** The contracts we have with insurance companies provide a generalization of what types of services the insurance company will generally cover. Each covered service is assigned an allowed amount. As mentioned above, the allowed amount is the fee or price the insurance company allows us to collect for a particular service. This amount may be payable by the insurance company and/or the patient depending on the patient's policy. A patient may have to pay all or part of the allowable amount to meet an annual deductible, co-pay, or other out-of-pocket expense outlined by their individual policy.

Individual policies may match this list or have some variation, but it is important to note that the individual policy will always dictate what services will and will not be covered for a given patient.

Non-covered services may be assigned an allowed amount depending on the policy. Contact your insurance company to clarify any and all costs you will be held liable for. If we know that a service will not be covered by your policy, we will ask that you sign an Advanced Beneficiary Notice. This document explains the cost associated with the services to be rendered and your responsibility to pay for such services.

READ & KNOW YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY.  
CONTACT YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY ANYTIME YOU HAVE  
QUESTIONS ON COVERED SERVICES AND/OR PAYMENT FOR SERVICES.

## **Phone Calls: How We Handle Calls to Our Office**

When you dial 587-4101, one of our friendly front desk receptionists will personally answer the phone and then ask who your doctor is here. Once they know who your doctor is, they know which unit assistant you need to be directed to.

When the unit assistant (UA) answers the phone, she will be able to help you schedule an appointment, or she can deliver a message to your doctor's nurse if you have questions or need a medication refilled. The UA takes messages to allow the nurse time necessary to assist the doctor with patients being seen in the office.

## **Phone Calls: Leaving a Message When Calling Our Office**

Sometimes, when the unit assistant's phone is busy with another patient on the line, you will be directed to the voicemail option. Some UAs have multiple voicemail inboxes for **options** such as "Same Day or Acute Appointments," "Refills," or "New Patients." Please listen carefully to the options provided so we receive your message in the most efficient manner.

The UA checks her voicemail inbox **frequently** throughout the day, and does her very best to address every single message by the end of the day. However, our response to you could possibly be delayed for a variety of reasons.

- 1) Your doctor is out of the office and not able to answer your question until the following day.
- 2) We receive a high volume of phone calls and must address them while also serving our in-clinic patients.
- 3) We have incomplete information and/or are waiting to hear back from a third party (such as your insurance company, or a medical specialist).

Please avoid background noises and *clearly state* your **full name, date of birth, and phone number** *every time* you call. This is vital in helping us to address your message promptly.

Please leave a **brief, but specific message** for the unit assistant. Examples, please . . .

**Say:** "My son Jimmie has a cold and we would like an appointment to see the doctor today."

**Say:** "I would like to schedule my annual physical."

**Say:** "I need my [specific medication] called in to [specific pharmacy]."

**Say:** "I think I am experiencing some side effects from my medication and would like to discuss them with the nurse."

**Do Not Say:** "I need my meds refilled."

**Do Not Say:** "I have a question for the nurse."

**Do Not Say:** "Hey, call me back."

Please **do not leave multiple messages** regarding the same issue / question. Listening to "duplicate" messages can hamper our efficiency, delaying our ability to respond to everyone promptly. If you have not heard back from the unit assistant or a nurse within **24 hours / one business day**, it is reasonable to call again and confirm that we received your message.

If you called in for a prescription refill, please **check with your pharmacy** before calling us again after the two-business-day time period has lapsed. Our nurses work to get those refills sent in promptly for you, and if you do not hear from us with any questions or concerns, you can safely assume that your prescription is at the pharmacy. You are also able to request refills directly through your pharmacy, eliminating the need for us as the middle-man altogether.