



425 Henrietta Street
Webster, TX 77598
Phone: 281.332.0500
Fax: 281-332-0049
Web: abtforkids.com

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents, we consider it a great honor to be entrusted with the care of your children. We make every effort to provide personal, friendly, timely, and professional care for every child who comes to our practice. Providing quality care requires that we work in full cooperation with you to ensure the health and well being of your children. Your children are our top priority and there are contributions you can make that will help us in our efforts to serve them, and you, more effectively. Thus, we are consolidating our policies and procedures into a letter of information that covers many of the major concerns of our office.

APPOINTMENTS

Children are seen by appointment only. Many of you know from past experience that we try our best to accommodate your schedule when making appointments. Unfortunately, the most popular times of the day are the first thing in the morning and the last thing in the afternoon. The afternoon hours are particularly popular because of parental work hours and the propensity for children to come home ill from school. Our office hours are 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., but patient visits are scheduled around the doctor's hours from 9:00 - 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. We intentionally end hours early in the morning and afternoon because we inevitably run over until noon and 5:00 P.M., respectively. Be assured, we will do our best to see your ill child no matter how busy the schedule, but we need your help in trying to come during the day and not at peak times if possible.

In addition, we ask for your cooperation in notifying us at least an hour ahead of time if you are unable to keep an appointment. We are experiencing numerous no-shows, many for well check-ups. We allot at least twenty minutes per well child, so you can imagine the amount of time lost that could be given to a sick child. Due to the frequency of this problem, it has become necessary for us to institute a charge for missed appointments of \$25.00 that will be payable before or at your child's next appointment. We also ask that you make every effort to be on time for your appointment. Please try to let us know if you will be late. We may need to reschedule your appointment should you arrive more than fifteen minutes late.

IMMUNIZATIONS

We are required by law to maintain a written record of your child's immunizations. We are also required to inform you of the immunizations being given, provide you with a written explanation for each vaccine, and acquire your signature acknowledging that you received information about each medication being given. We must also record the date given, site given, vaccine lot number, vaccine manufacturer, and the date the vaccine information sheets were printed. The immunization charge of \$10.00 covers the cost of the paperwork and the time required to facilitate Federal requirements for tracking your child's immunizations, including inputting them into the Imm Trac system; charges that are over and above the cost of the physical examination.

This charge may or may not be covered by your insurance company, but codes allowing such charges have been provided by the insurance industry. If these charges are not covered and we are not expressly prohibited from doing so, the cost will be passed on to you for payment. If your insurance company does not cover these charges, we encourage you to contact your carrier and to file a complaint with the Texas Department of Insurance at 1-800-252-3439. Be assured, we are pursuing resolution of this issue as well. The code for immunization education is 99071-1.

PAYMENT POLICY

Payment for services is due at the time of each visit. Any balance owed after insurance has paid is also due. The responsible party who brings the child to the office is also responsible for paying any charges



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due at the time of the visit. If the balance cannot be paid and payment arrangements have not been made, you may be asked to reschedule the child's appointment.

For your child's sake as well as ours, we ask that you not involve us in marital disputes or collecting payment from someone other than the presenting person. It is your responsibility to keep us informed of any change in insurance and to present us with a current card. We cannot submit claims without them and you will be held responsible for payment if insurance does not pay. Please keep us informed of changes in addresses, phone numbers, and/or employment as well. Unless specifically prohibited by court mandate, non-custodial parents are afforded equal access to medical records.

Unfortunately, there are times when checks written in payment of account balances are returned to us by our bank. They are usually returned due to insufficient funds, sometimes due to unforeseen circumstances, but generally not without the check writer's knowledge. Banks inform clients that they are returning checks and why. We expect payment in full for returned checks along with a \$30.00 returned check fee. We will make every attempt to contact you should a check be returned, but if payment is not promptly received, we will not hesitate to prosecute for theft of services to the fullest extent of the law.

PAPERWORK

Parents often require paperwork for their children including, but most certainly not limited to, sports physical forms, daycare forms, and medical records release forms. If at all possible, bring this paperwork with you to your child's appointment. If the forms are presented at a regularly scheduled appointment, there will be no additional charge for completion. If, however, a form must be completed without an accompanying office visit, there will be a form completion fee of \$10.00. The chart must be pulled, the form must be completed, the doctor must sign, and the form must reach its designated destination, all of which require a significant amount of extra time out of our day.

PRESCRIPTION REFILL POLICY

If your child needs a refill of a current medication, please call your pharmacy first and have the pharmacist fax a refill request to our office at 281-332-0049. We will promptly sign it and fax it back. This allows us to keep a written record of the transaction in your child's chart.

Our office follows the guidelines established by the American Academy of Pediatrics which dictate limiting the use of antibiotics. Please do not expect either a refill of antibiotics or a new prescription for antibiotics without your child being seen in the office. This policy applies to most medications unless Dr. Farella authorizes approval of a prescription refill.

If your child is on a controlled substance medication, there are specific guidelines that must be followed. For purposes of this letter, this is a reminder that prescriptions that expire and must be rewritten will be at a cost of \$5.00.

RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS

When your child is seen for respiratory problems, a written treatment plan is designed specifically for your child's needs. Any medication currently being taken is evaluated for efficacy. If changes are necessary, the appropriate prescriptions are written. If a child is changing medications, a weaning schedule is given as well as other pertinent handouts. A thorough physical examination is performed and the treatment plan is explained in detail. There is a \$20.00 charge for the treatment plan (code 99071) that primarily covers the cost of the paperwork required; charges that are incurred over and above the cost of the physical examination. **REMEMBER:** a treatment plan is only as good as parent/patient compliance. The idea is to prevent exacerbation of respiratory problems.



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TELEPHONE CALL POLICY

IN THE EVENT OF A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

After regular office hours, the telephone is answered via the same telephone number. Phone calls after hours are for emergencies only. Calls for appointments, prescription refills, and general information can be answered during regular office hours. If you must call after hours, please keep in mind that Dr. Farella and her staff are providing a professional service equivalent to time allotted for an office visit.

Insurance companies allow physicians and their professional staff to charge for phone calls and codes are provided for billing purposes based on the amount of time required. The fees charged for phone calls range from \$25.00 to \$50.00 and will be billed to your insurance carrier. If insurance does not cover the charge and we are not expressly prohibited from doing so, you will be billed for the balance of the charge. Currently, regular office hours are 8:30 - 12:00 and 1:00 - 5:00 Monday through Friday.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. We look forward to serving you and watching your children grow.