



WallaceStreet

MEDICAL CLINIC

Clinic Policies and Clarifying Misperceptions

Our clinic has a ZERO tolerance policy for abusive, offensive or bullying behavior and/or language to our staff and physicians

Disrespectful or argumentative behavior will result in a warning letter for the first offense. Further offenses will result in a dismissal from your physician and the clinic

****NOTE: Serious offenses will lead to dismissal without warning****

All prescriptions, referrals, forms, letters, notes and signature requests will require an appointment with your doctor. Staff cannot “just send a message to your physician” for these. Faxed refill requests from your pharmacy will not be filled. Even if you “have been on this medication for years”, it does require a check in with your physician for the renewals.

Patients cannot be ‘squeezed in’ to the doctor’s schedule. The physicians have full control over their schedules from the times that they start and stop to the amount of patients that they see in one day and the length of each appointment. Staff cannot alter this schedule and must work within it. Even physicians need a work-life balance and are overburdened like the rest of the medical system.

Patients MUST come in person for their appointment when the doctor requests it. College of Physicians and Surgeons requires that physicians must see their patients in person when needed and care cannot be all done virtually. There are many reasons that your physician may request a face to face appointment. Patients must be agreeable to coming in for in person appointments when your physician feels that it is necessary. By refusing to come in, you are not abiding by the patient-physician mutually trusting and respectful relationship. Breakdown in the relationship may lead to dismissal.

Patients MUST accommodate the physician's schedule. While we do try our best to work around your schedule when booking appointments, we do have to adhere to the physicians schedule. We understand that you work and may work the same hours that we do, but you will need to take time off work to attend appointments when necessary. Employers must allow their employees time off to attend appointments.

Patients cannot be booked with another physician. All physicians are very busy and their schedules are booking 4-6 weeks in advance with their own patients. They do not have room in their schedules to see other patients.

All Uninsured Services are private pay. All forms, notes, letters, and record requests are not covered under MSP. Patients will be responsible for paying the fee for the service. See fee schedule, set out by Doctors of BC, for these services.

IF you have cough/cold/flu symptoms, medical masks MUST be worn at all times while in the clinic. While we have removed our mandatory mask policy for the time being, we do ask that you help prevent the spread of infections by wearing a mask when you have these symptoms. Mask mandate could be put back into place if the government deems another mandate is necessary.

Telephone and in person appointments are booked based on reason. The physicians have all determined what medical reasons can be booked straight into the office and what needs to be booked by telephone first. Social distancing is still in place to protect our vulnerable patients. To enforce this, the physicians have set days that they see patients in the office, so we need to determine who needs to be seen in those limited spots.

Missed Appointments/No Showing. Time has been allocated for you in our schedule. If you do not show up or answer your phone call then that time is wasted and could have been used for another patient. There is a no show fee for missed appointments.

Require 24 hours notice for Cancellations. We do require 24 hours notice for cancellation of your appointment to allow us to schedule another patient for your time slot. If your appointment is canceled with less than 24 hours notice, this could result in a 'no show' and may incur a fee.

Email Correspondence. Please only email if you have been directed to by our staff or physicians. Medical advice will not be given over email, you must book an appointment. Appointments are not booked via email. Please either call the clinic and press '2' to speak with reception or book online.

Inactive Patients. If you have not had an appointment with your physician for more than 3 years you are considered inactive. If you have been healthy and don't need an appointment, it is best practice to give us a call at least once per year to let us know that you are still under your doctor's care. For continuity of care, a check up appointment is always recommended every 1-2 years.

We are not a walk-in clinic or urgent care centre. While we do try to keep some same day appointments for semi-urgent matters, these are not guaranteed. If you have an urgent matter please attend a walk-in clinic, urgent care centre or emergency department, depending on the severity of your condition. Please do not go to the emergency room at the hospital unless it is truly an emergency as they are overwhelmed as well.

Common Patient Questions & Concerns Answered

“My appointment was at 2:00pm and the doctor has not called me yet” While your physician tries their best to run on time, they do get behind. This is not because they have booked too many patients but rather that not all medical reasons may be easily dealt with within the time allotted. The physician may need to spend a bit of extra time with a patient, which puts them behind. When you need a little ‘extra time’ you will be happy to be on the receiving end.

“This is an urgent matter, I need to be seen today” We do try to keep some spots available each day for semi-urgent matters to be booked on the same day. There may be only one or a few available slots. The staff need to do their best to triage for these appointments so that they do not fill up with non-urgent matters. What you may consider urgent is not necessarily urgent in the grand scheme of things. Reasons such as prescription refills, referrals, results, follow ups, doctor’s notes and forms are routine appointments, not urgent reasons to be booked in a same day slot. You need to plan and book your appointments ahead of time. Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on our part.

“You never answer your phones” Our phones are on from 9:00am - 3:00pm with a closure for lunch from 12:00pm to 1:00pm. While the phones are on, they are very busy and the staff are answering them all the time. They do have patients that are here in the office that they need to attend to so you may have to wait a little while, but your call will be answered.

“My phone did not ring” or “I missed the phone call” “The doctor needs to call me back right away” You need to ensure that your phone accepts blocked or unknown callers. This is in your phone or provider settings and is not something that we can do for you. Please ensure that your ringer is turned on ahead of your appointment time and that you are available to take the call and stay available until the doctor calls you. Treat a telephone appointment as you would an in office appointment. You need to take the time away from work and be in a private area where you can talk freely. As above, doctors get behind so you cannot expect the call exactly on time. If you miss your appointment, the physician needs to move on to the next patient. Some physicians may try again later if time permits, however, you most likely will need to reschedule your appointment. It is not the staff’s responsibility if you miss your appointment.

“Why can’t I discuss multiple reasons in one appointment?” The standard family doctor’s visit for BC is 10 minutes in length. If there are more than 1 or 2 problems to deal with, it is not possible for us to deal with them adequately in one appointment of any length. While it is more effective to see you for one reason per visit, we realize that medical problems do not always arise one at a time, and it may be difficult for you to know which is most important, so we do prefer to be flexible if possible. We can do a better job for you by seeing you a few times, rather than trying to struggle through everything in one visit. Saving up your concerns, to avoid multiple visits, leads to either an overtime visit and/or only partially dealt-with problems. You will get better medical care if you come in as problems arise, and at the same time you will really help keep our scheduling on time.

“I am only a few minutes late for my appointment. The doctor is always behind anyway” We do try to accommodate late arrivals, if at all possible, depending on how late the patient is. If you are past your appointment time slot then you will need to reschedule.

Accommodating a patient that is past their appointment time slot will put the physician further behind for all the other patients.

“I only need a prescription renewal, I don’t need to speak with the doctor” Even for prescriptions that are long term medications, for conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, a visit is required so that your condition may be reassessed by us. Medical conditions need periodic evaluation (often including lab work, etc) to ensure that the condition is properly controlled, and that there are no complications. What seems like a simple task of writing a prescription refill is only a small part of what your doctor needs to do to determine whether your condition is being well-controlled, what tests may be due, and whether a change of treatment is needed. This always takes up a whole visit, and cannot be done at the tail end of a visit that you have booked for other reasons.

“It’s a telephone appointment, why can’t I be away?” Our physicians are licensed to practice in BC. The patient needs to be in BC to facilitate the appointment. If you are out of province or out of the country you need to attend medical services where you are such as a walk-in clinic. This is no different than when we had all in office appointments.

“Why can’t I book a yearly physical?” Routine annual physicals are not covered by MSP. We suggest that you have a telephone appointment where your physician can order annual blood work, etc. Due to our limited in office appointments, you must first discuss the need for a full physical with your physician. We do book routine cancer screening exams such as pap smears and prostate exams.

“Why don’t you have a cancellation list?” We have 8 physicians and over 10,000 patients, with 6 staff and the physicians all working within the same schedule. This makes it next to impossible to catch a cancellation as it gets filled just as quickly.

“I changed my phone number in Medeo, why did you call the wrong number?” Medeo is a third party application that works with our EMR (electronic medical record) schedule. Changing your information in your Medeo account only changes the account, not our EMR. For any contact information changes you need to contact the clinic directly.

“Why do you still ask us Covid question?” Covid is still very much prevalent in our community. We ask screening questions so that we can ensure, to the best of our ability, that we are not bringing the virus into our clinic. We have vulnerable patients and staff in the clinic and we need to do our best to keep them safe.

“Why can’t my doctor take on my family members?” Sometimes our physicians may make an extreme exception, however, their practices are all full. You are already waiting longer periods of time to be seen. If they took on your family, then the wait would be even longer. We encourage all family members to register with the Health Connect Registry. If and when we have a physician taking on patients, they will take them from their list. You can register for your region here, <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-connect-registry>