

## PHONE CALL POLICY

The office phone number is available to all patients for **non-urgent** communication with our office during office hours. However, we see a large volume of patients in our office each day and it is difficult to provide one-on-one service and still attend to a large volume of patient phone calls, so there are some guidelines we ask that you try to follow.

After hours, we ask that you limit your phone calls to **urgent** needs only.

Patients **should** contact the office immediately if any of the following are **new or present more than 48 hours after a PROCEDURE**: (1) fever greater than 101 degrees, (2) neck stiffness, (3) drainage from a procedure or surgery site, (4) weakness, numbness or tingling in arm(s) or leg(s). **Call 911 for all emergencies.**

Patients should also call if they are having an **allergic reaction to new medication** prescribed. Allergic reactions are different than medications not working or wishing to change medications due to minor issues. **Call 911 for all emergencies.**

The non-urgent requests include:

- PRESCRIPTIONS - Requesting refills, reporting any **non-urgent** intolerance, minor negative side effects, or issues with your pharmacy
- REPORTING PROCEDURE RESULTS – that is exactly what follow up visits are designed to accomplish.
- REPORTING ANY NEW OR CHANGED MEDICAL CONDITIONS which could impact your treatment - Especially new medications from other doctors or hospital stays
- APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING: View, confirm, schedule, reschedule and cancel (24-hour advance notice)
- ANY OTHER **NON-URGENT** CLINICAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS OR ISSUES

All messages received via phone or voice mail will be reviewed and documented by the clinical staff and you will receive a return call or message directly if the clinical staff feels it is necessary.

We typically do not return phone calls to discuss imaging (MRIs or x-rays), to discuss the treatment plan or to request routine medication changes. That is what an office visit is designed to accomplish. These issues are too complex to discuss over a phone call even if insurance or federal regulations allowed us to do so which they often do not. If your procedure or medications are not working, if your pain level has changed, or if it has been greater than three months since your last visit with us then we request that you schedule a follow up visit to discuss. We will NOT change your pain medications OUTSIDE OF AN OFFICE VISIT unless previously discussed and documented.

Please remember that calling repeatedly during the day **does not** speed up a return call, it simply slows down our ability to efficiently and effectively attend to all of our patients' needs.

Our goal is to provide each of our patients with the best we have to offer in pain intervention. Your cooperation in adhering to these guidelines will improve the overall care we are able to provide to all of our patients.

I have read, understand and agree to this policy.

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*Patient or Guardian (with defined relationship) Signature\*\**

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*Date*

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*Witness by Southern Spine and Pain Staff*

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*Date*