



## Welcome to Ellenton Pediatrics, Your Child's Medical Home

[www.ellentonped.com](http://www.ellentonped.com)

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**This letter will acquaint you with our office policies and procedures. We strive for a mutually respectful and thriving partnership with your family, with a common ultimate goal: your child's health and well being.**

We are a group of pediatric providers offering comprehensive primary care to infants, children and adolescent patients through high school. We work as a team, with a unified philosophy of medical practice. We consult with one another on a regular basis and want you to feel comfortable with each of us. We do encourage all patients to see the same primary care provider, doctor or Certified Nurse Practitioner (CNP), as often as possible. While this can clearly be done for your well child visits, there will most likely be times that your child needs to be seen, but your usual provider is not available. Your child will always receive outstanding care.

### **1. OFFICE HOURS**

**Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Our office is closed for lunch from 12.15 p.m. to 1.15. p.m.

### **2. APPOINTMENTS**

**Patients are seen by appointment only. Walk-ins are strongly discouraged.**

Walk-ins lead to increased wait times for scheduled patients. If you arrive without an appointment, we will schedule your child for the next available time slot. To avoid having to return later, please call our office to make an appointment prior to coming in.

**In the event of a life-threatening emergency, dial 911.**

We will always do our best to schedule a same day appointment for an ill child, but this may not be possible if you call us late in the afternoon.

Emergency rooms are for serious illnesses or injuries. Whenever possible call our office before going to the emergency room. Many times we can help you avoid time-consuming and costly emergency room visits.

Please call in advance to ask if a sibling of a child who is already scheduled may also have an appointment for a sick visit. We may not be always able to accommodate if you simply have the sibling "tag along".

Please inform the person who is scheduling your appointment what you would like to discuss at that visit so adequate time is allowed. Inadequate time allowed for discussion of multiple issues and patients arriving late for appointments are the two most common reasons providers run late in seeing the patients that follow.

We recommend yearly, preventative, well exams for all children and adolescents, ages 3 to 19. Before age three, visits are more frequent: 3-5 days, 2-4 weeks, then 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24 and 30 months.

Patients of all ages with chronic health concerns and/or requiring daily medication regular refills (asthma, allergies, diabetes, obesity, ADHD etc) may be required to follow up as instructed by your provider, usually every 3 to 4 months.

### **3. REMINDER CALLS**

*As a courtesy*, you may receive automatic or front desk reminder phone calls 1-2 days in advance of your scheduled appointment. Regardless of whether you get this call or not, it is your responsibility to come at your scheduled appointment time, or to call and cancel if you cannot make it. Please keep us informed of any changes to your contact information.

### **4. MISSED / CANCELLED APPOINTMENTS**

**We kindly request that you provide at least 4 business hours cancellation-notice**, so we can offer the time slot initially reserved for your child to another family who needs it. For example, a 2 PM appointment may be cancelled by 10 A.M same day, while an 8 A.M. appointment will need to be cancelled by 1 PM the prior business day. We do not overbook our schedule to accommodate no-shows. Overbooking means long-wait times and unhappy parents. Please don't miss your appointment!

Patients who miss two or more appointments within a 12 month-period, will be charged a \$25 fee. The No-Show fees are the sole responsibility of the patient and must be paid in full before the patient's next appointment. After three No-Shows, we reserve the right to decline any further appointments, and sever our relationship.

Families who no-show well exams scheduled for 2 or more siblings concomitantly may not be allowed to schedule the children's well exams together again.

Missing an appointment without any kind of notice or valid excuse is simply inconsiderate for our physicians and also for the other patients, who may have been denied the time slot we reserved for your child.

Prospective patients who miss their first appointment will not be able to reschedule.

**Our practice firmly believes that a successful provider - patient relationship is based upon understanding, good communication and mutual respect. We trust that you will be here for the time we scheduled just for your child.**

## **5. LATE ARRIVALS**

If you're running late for an appointment due to unforeseen circumstances, we ask that you please call our office to let us know that you're on your way, so that the providers can continue to see patients in a timely manner. Please be aware, notifying us of late arrival does not guarantee you will be seen close to your scheduled appointment time, and may result in a longer wait. **Arrival 30 minutes or more after your appointment time will result in an automatic cancellation, and the No-Show policy will apply.**

## **6. FORMS**

If you require a form for day care, school, camp, sports, or any other activity, please request it to be filled out at the time of your child's well exam. If you request a form to be filled out at a later date, please allow 24 - 48 business hours for the form to be completed.

## **7. PRESCRIPTION REFILLS**

Please allow 24-48 hours for any medication refill, and if possible, have your pharmacy send us a refill request. Plan ahead: do not wait until the medicine container is empty. **We will not refill medications after business hours.**

## **8. SPECIALIST REFERRALS / AUTHORIZATIONS**

If your child has a scheduled appointment with a specialist and your insurance requires a referral or authorization, please arrange for the specialist to send us an authorization request at least 72 hours prior to the appointment. Several insurances will also require us to first evaluate the child's medical matter in our office, and confirm that a specialist referral is indeed necessary.

## **9. UPDATE ADDRESS / PHONE**

Please remember to update your patient information with a current address and one or more contact phone numbers each time you are in the office, so that we can reach you with scheduling issues and test results (labs, radiology etc).

## **10. MEDICAL RECORDS**

If you request a copy of your child's medical record there is a processing fee. Records will be transferred within 30 days of the written request.

## **11. ADHD**

If your child is receiving medication for ADD/ADHD, please ask for our ADHD/ADD guidelines.

## **12. HIPAA**

We do not fax any medical information to your home or work office. We will fax immunization records to your child's school or daycare. We do not communicate with patients through emails or text messaging.

### 13. AFTER HOURS CALLS

**For medical emergencies, please call 911.**

**For poisoning emergencies, please call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222**

We are committed to providing guidance and comfort to our patients any time it is needed. As a courtesy to all their patients, our doctors and nurse practitioners offer an after hours advice and triage service.

Most insurance companies have a toll-free advice line. The number can be found on the insurance card. Still, if you wish to speak with one of our providers regarding an urgent medical problem that cannot wait until regular business hours, please call the office number (941) 723-7877, follow the prompts, and the provider on call will be paged.

**After hours, our providers do not have access to medical records and do not renew prescriptions. They do not discuss long-term complaints or routine questions, and do not schedule, nor cancel appointments. They will not call in prescriptions for a problem that was not first evaluated in the office. Medication dosing information for fever reducers and Benadryl may be found on our website. After-hours phone calls should be limited to urgent matters that cannot wait until the office opens. If you are calling after 9 p.m., please only do so if there is a true emergency.**

Our physicians and nurse practitioners rotate being on call. Thus, the on call provider is unlikely to be the same one you may have seen in the office. The on call pediatrician is not at the office and is likely at home with their family. Calls for obviously non-urgent matters will not be returned.

Please leave a message with the child's full name, date of birth and a brief reason for your call. We triage the urgency of the calls received. Please do not forget to leave your complete phone number, if possible more than once, and even an alternate number. All calls will be returned from private numbers. Please make sure that the phone number at which you want to be reached has the caller ID block disabled, so that our providers can connect with you. Inform the provider if your child has any chronic condition (such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease). The on call pediatricians cannot make a medical diagnosis over the phone; they can only provide limited advice. They may recommend that your child be seen in an emergency room or urgent care center. However, since they do not actually examine the child, it will be your decision if a child may wait to be seen in our office during business hours, or if an urgent care or ER visit is needed.

Our providers will always try to call you back promptly. In the rare case that you have not been called back 30 minutes after you left a message, please call again. Urgent hospital matters, multiple concomitant calls, a poorly heard message or no return phone number left at all, technical difficulties and other factors may occasionally prevent our providers from calling you back. In the event you are unable to reach us, and feel that you cannot wait, please take your child to the nearest urgent care center or emergency room.

#### **14. FACEBOOK**

Our Facebook page is meant to be informative, to keep a light tone, and to entertain. We try to provide reliable online resources about childhood conditions, development and behavior, immunizations, nutrition and parenting in general. We strive to stay up to date with the most current medical research, and to communicate timely specific facts about our practice, such as information about illnesses most seen and community outbreaks. Our providers are the only ones administering and contributing to this page, based on their pediatric training and experience, their practical knowledge as parents, and their common sense. We do appreciate all your "likes" and thrive on them, since it is often the only feedback we receive. Our Facebook page is not monitored daily. We do not answer specific medical questions, nor offer treatment recommendations on Facebook. We kindly invite you to call our office for such matters, or to speak with your child's provider. Everyone is welcome to leave comments and to make suggestions about content. All comments are public and can be viewed by all users of this site. Though differences of opinion may eventually arise, we ask that you avoid any confrontation about it with us or other parents on Facebook.

**REMEMBER! Do not use the Ellenton Pediatrics Facebook page to send us messages about medical concerns, administrative or billing matters. If you need us, please CALL US.**

#### **15. WAITING TIME**

We make every effort to keep your wait time to less than 15 minutes. However, on busy days, or if we encounter unexpected emergencies, it may be longer. Please let us know if you are under a lot of time pressure, or if you have been waiting for longer than 30 minutes. In general, the most common reason that we get behind is because our patients come late. **Tip:** scheduling first appointments in the morning and first in the afternoon will always lead to less waiting time. Obviously, most parents prefer the after school slots, but that is also when the wait time will be the longest. Plan your non-urgent appointments timely and wisely.

#### **16. WAITING ROOM SICK / WELL AREAS**

You've asked, we've listened: our spacious waiting area is separated in WELL (left) and ILL (right) areas. Please sit in our ill area your child is scheduled for a well exam, but has an acute illness, such as fever, colds, pink eye etc. Inform us right away if the child has fever and a rash. For the infection control purpose, we are against toy sharing in our waiting and exam rooms. We encourage you to bring with you something to keep your child occupied, or to ask our receptionist for a book to read with her/him while waiting.

#### **17. EXAM ROOMS**

Our ten examination rooms are playfully colored and decorated. Please tell us if your child has a favorite color or room, so that she/he could be more at ease during her visit. All rooms have books for parents to read to their children and for older kids to peruse by themselves. Please do not allow toddlers to bite, rip apart or stomp on the books, and return the books to their shelf when finished. We gladly accept donations of used children books. **Supervision of children is the parent's/guardian's responsibility.** Please keep their busy little hands away from our equipment, doors, drawers and wall decor.

## **18. IMMUNIZATIONS**

Every year, vaccines save millions of lives. Vaccinating your children may be the single most important health-promoting and life-saving intervention that you can perform as parents. Public health policy exists to promote the well being of all the children in our community.

Our pediatricians strongly believe in the importance and safety of immunizations. They are parents themselves, and their children are fully vaccinated. Unless medically contraindicated, they advocate vaccinating all children according to the schedule published by the U.S. Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). We share your child's vaccines with Florida Shots, the statewide database.

## **19. DIVORCED PARENTS**

"Joint Custody" means that each parent has equal access to the child's medical record. Without a court order, we will not stop either parent from looking at their child's chart or obtaining their child's test results. We will not call the other parent for consent prior to treatment. We will discuss with the accompanying parent information pertinent to the child's history and/or present exam. The parent not in attendance should obtain all information regarding the appointment from the attending parent. If possible, please refrain from calling us after the visit to inquire about what was already discussed with the other parent. Should the issues that come between parents become disruptive to our organization, we will discharge the patient from further treatment.

## **20. MUTUAL RESPECT**

This office is our work home and you are our welcome guest. We expect all of our guests to treat our staff and work home with full respect, as any guest in any home. Those who do not show respect may be asked to find care elsewhere. In return we expect our guests to be treated not only with respect, but kindness in all our interactions.

**Cell phones: So that we may serve you better we request you shut off your cell phone while in the office unless needed for emergency contact.**

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the service or care provided by Ellenton Pediatrics, we want to know about it. You may express your concerns to your child's physician or nurse practitioner, to another health care provider, or to our office coordinator. Unless we are aware of a problem, we are unable to correct it.

## **21. PATIENT/PROVIDER PARTNERSHIP IN THE CHILD'S HEALTH**

You are an important partner in your/your child's health care, and we encourage you to take an active role, and to discuss any concerns with your child's pediatrician. If you find you cannot comply with a treatment plan, please discuss that with your child's provider. Otherwise, those who do not comply may be asked to find medical care elsewhere.

## **22. TERMINATION**

We have the right to terminate a relationship with any patient/parent who is verbally abusive with any of our providers or staff, who repeatedly fails to follow our medical advice, who has three or more no-shows, or who does not pay for services.