

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES
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This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information.
Please review this document carefully.

We respect our legal obligation to keep this health information that identifies you private.

We are obligated by law to give you notice of our privacy practices. This notice describes how we protect your health information and what rights you have regarding it.

TREATMENT, PAYMENT and HEALTH OPERATIONS

The most common reason why we disclose your health information is for treatment, payment or health care operations. Examples of how we use or disclose information for treatment purposes are: setting up an appointment for you; examining your teeth; prescribing medications and faxing them to be filled; referring you to another doctor or clinic for other health care services; or getting copies of your health information from another professional that you may have seen before us. Examples of how we use or disclose your health information for payment purposes are: asking you about your health or dental care plans, or other sources of payment; preparing and sending bills or claims; and collecting unpaid amounts (either ourselves or through a collection agency or attorney). "Health Care Operations" mean those administrative and managerial functions that we have to do in order to run our office. Examples of how we use or disclose your health information for health care operations are: financial or billing audits; internal quality assurance; personnel decisions; participation in managed care plans; defense of legal matters; business planning; and outside storage of records.

We routinely use your health information inside our office for these purposes without any special permission. If we need to disclose your health information outside of our office for these reasons, (we usually will not) ask for your special written permission.

USES and DISCLOSURES FOR OTHER REASONS WITHOUT PERMISSION

In some limited situations, the law allows or requires us to use or disclose your health information without your permission. Not all of these situations will apply to us. Such uses of disclosure are:

- *when a state or federal law mandates that certain health information be reported for a specific purpose
- *for public health purposes, such as contagious disease reporting, investigation or surveillance, and notices to and from the federal Food and Drug Administration regarding drugs or medical services
- *uses and disclosures for health oversight activities, such as for licensing for doctors, for audits by Medicare, Medicaid, or for investigation of possible violations of health care laws
- *disclosures for judicial and administrative proceedings, such as in response to subpoenas or orders of court or administrative agencies.
- *disclosures for law enforcement purposes, such as to provide information about someone who is or is suspected to be a victim of a crime, to provide information about a crime at our office, or to report a crime that happened somewhere else
- *disclosures to a medical examiner to identify a dead person or to determine the cause of death, or to funeral directors to aid in burial, or to organizations that handle organ or tissue donations
- *uses or disclosures for health related research
- *uses or disclosures to prevent a serious threat to health or safety
- *uses or disclosures for specialized government functions, such as for protection of the president or high ranking government officials, for lawful national intelligence activities, for military purposes, or for the evaluation and health of the foreign service
- *disclosures of de-identified information
- *disclosures relating to worker's compensation programs
- *disclosures of a "limited data set" for research, public health, or health care operations
- *incidental disclosures that are an unavoidable by-product of permitted uses and disclosures
- *disclosures to "business associates" who perform health care operations for us and who commit to respect the privacy of your health information
- *specify other uses and disclosures affected by state law

Unless you object, we will also share relevant information about your care with your family or friends who are helping you with your dental care.

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS:

We may call or write to remind you of scheduled appointments, or that it is time to make a routine cleaning appointment. We may also call or write to notify you of other treatments or services available at our office that might help you. unless you tell us

otherwise, we may mail you an appointment reminder on a post card and/or leave a reminder message on your answering machine or with someone who answers your phone if you are not home.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES:

We will not make any other uses or disclosures of your health information unless you sign a written "authorization form". The content of an "authorization form" is determined by Federal Law. Sometimes, we may initiate the authorization process if the use or disclosure is our idea. Sometimes you may initiate the process if it's your idea for us to send your information to someone else. Typically, in this situation you will give us properly completed authorization forms, or you can use one of ours. If we initiate the process and ask you to sign an authorization form, you do not have to sign it. If you do not sign the authorization, we cannot make or use the disclosure. If you do not sign one, you make revoke it at any time unless we have already acted in reliance upon it. Revocations must be in writing. Send them to the office contact person named at the beginning of this notice.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

The law gives you many rights regarding your health information. You can:

*ask us to restrict our uses and disclosures for purposes of treatment (except emergency treatment) payment of health care operations. We do not have to agree to do this, but if we request to the office contact person at the address shown at the beginning of this notice.

*ask us to communicate with you in a confidential way, such as phoning you at work rather than at home, by mailing health information to a different address, or by using e-mail to your personal e-mail address. We will accommodate these requests if they are reasonable, and if you pay us for any extra cost. If you want to ask for confidential communications, send written requests to the office contact person at the address.

*ask to see or to get photocopies of your health information. By law, there are few limited situations where we can refuse to permit access or copying. For the most part, however, you will be able to review or have a copy of your health information within 30 working days of asking us (or 60 days if the information requested is stored off site). You may have to pay for photocopies in advance. If we deny your request, we will send a written explanation and instructions about how to get an impartial review of our denial if one is legally available. By law, we can have one 30 day extension of the time for us to give you access or photocopies if we send you a written notice of extension. If you want to review or get copies of your health information send a written request to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this notice.

*ask us to amend your health information if you think it is incorrect or incomplete. If we agree, we will amend the information within 60 days from when you ask us. We will send corrected information to persons who we know got the wrong information, and others that you specify. If we do not agree, you can write a statement of your position, and we will include it with your health information along with any rebuttal statement that we may write. Once your statement of position and/or rebuttal is included in your health information, we will send it along whenever we make a permitted disclosure of your health information. By law, we can have one 30 day extension of time to consider a request for amendment if we notify you in writing of the extension. If you want to ask us to amend your health information, send a written request, including your reasons for the amendment to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this notice.

*get a list of the disclosures that we have made of your health information within the past 6 years (or shorter period if you want). By law, the list will not include: disclosures for purpose of treatment, payment or health care operations; disclosures with your authorizations; incidental disclosures; disclosures required by law; and some other limited disclosures. You are entitled to one such list per year without charge. If you want more frequent lists, you will have to pay for them in advance. We will usually respond within 60 days of receiving it, but by law we can have one 30 day extension of time if we notify you of the extension in writing. If you want a list, send a written to the office contact person at the address, fax or email shown at the beginning of this notice.

OUR NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

By law, we must abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices until we choose to change it. We reserve the right to change this notice at any time as allowed by law. If we change this notice, the new privacy practices will apply to your health information that we have already as well as to such information that we may generate in the future. If we change our Notice of Privacy Practices, we will post the new notice in our office.

COMPLAINTS

If you think that we have not properly respected the privacy of your health information, you are free to complain to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights. We will not retaliate against you if you make a complaint. If you want to complain to us, send a written complaint to our office contact person at the address shown at the beginning of this notice. If you prefer, you can discuss your complaint in person or by phone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you want more information about our privacy practices, call or visit the office contact person at the address shown at the beginning of this notice.