



Branford Pediatrics

= & Adolescent Medicine =

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PRACTICE POLICIES

Branford Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine has several policies that are designed to keep our standard of care high, to protect the health of all children and to respect the time of both patients and parents alike:

1) **VACCINATIONS:**

All patients must be vaccinated. There are times and circumstances where it is warranted to reschedule a vaccine—providers work with parents when these arise. However, if a parent chooses to forego all vaccines or vaccines we consider essential, we ask the family to find a practice that better suits its needs. Please see our VACCINE POLICY STATEMENT.

2) **APPOINTMENT TIMES:**

In order to ensure that our patients are seen as close to appointment time as possible, we may ask patients to reschedule if they arrive more than 15 minutes late for an appointment. Always call ahead, if you think you will be late, to see if we can keep your appointment in place. If a provider is running far behind, we try our best to reach you to make you aware, or potentially adjust your appointment time, so you do not have a long wait time. We will always have emergencies in pediatrics and ask for your patience if these arise when you are with us.

3) **NO SMOKING OR E-CIGARETTE USE:**

We do not permit smoking or the use of E-cigarettes in our office building.

4) **CELL PHONES:**

We ask that all patients be considerate in their use of cell phones—talking or texting while with a receptionist, nurse or provider can negatively influence the good care we want to provide for your child.

5) **NO SHOW APPOINTMENTS:**

We certainly understand that it is necessary to reschedule appointments at times—out of consideration for all our patients' needs and the high demand for physical examinations and sick visits, patients may be subject to a no show fee if an appointment is missed without proper notification. We ask that you call to cancel within 24 hours of the scheduled appointment. Patients who have not shown for any type of an appointment 3 times or more in a year face a possible discharge from the practice.

6) **WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS:**

We provide a public internet access to our patients while they are in our office. As with all public internet access, we remind you the access is not secure and care should be taken while using it.

7) DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

In our contacts with you, we will frequently ask if there have been any changes to your demographic information. This becomes especially important when there are multiple adult caregivers in a child's life. It is also important that you identify legal guardianship or specific loss of parental rights. If, at any point, you would like to change the people you have designated as authorized representatives in discussing your or your child's care with us, you can inform a member of our staff and we will help you create a new form to keep on file in the patient chart.

The authorized representative form allows you to list anyone who has your permission to talk to us on the phone about your child's care—it does not give anyone listed permission to obtain your own or your child's records or to make decisions about your own or your child's care.

8) PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS:

Parents or Legal Guardians are the only people with permission to approve treatment for their children. If a child is seeing a provider without an accompanying parent or legal guardian, the parent or legal guardian **MUST** be available by phone or have sent in a specific note for that particular visit giving permission for treatment.

9) 18 YEAR OLDS:

18 year olds are considered adult and have specific legal rights regarding their own health care—as such, 18 year olds are the responsible party for their own health care decisions. We **MUST** have an authorized representative form in place, signed by the 18 year old, that indicates that he/she gives permission for us to speak to the listed party—this includes permission to speak to the parents of the 18 year old. This also applies to record releases: young adults who are 18 years and older must sign their own record releases—parents cannot do this for them.

10) PATIENT PORTAL:

We are pleased to have a patient portal in place and encourage all parents/patients to use it. At this point in time, parents can access their children's records up through the age of 12—because of specific legal rights that 13 through 17 year olds have regarding particular aspects of their care, we cannot support parent access to these records—we hope to be able to facilitate limited access in the future, with the requisite legal protections in place for this age group. 18 year olds must set up the patient portal account in their names only, **WITH THEIR OWN EMAIL ADDRESSES**—this is also a legal consideration. We cannot grant parents access to the records of children 18 years or older.

11) FORMS:

We fill out thousands of forms yearly, with most of those occurring in the summer months. We will automatically provide a state required blue form or yellow day care form with any physical examination that your child receives in our office—these, along with any other forms you might present at the time of the physical exam, are free of charge. Any form requested outside of this appointment, though, will incur a charge. Although we try our best to get these forms back to you as quickly as possible, we require 7 to 10 days to complete them. In order for us to complete a form, **THE PATIENT PORTION MUST BE FILLED OUT BEFORE WE CAN BEGIN TO PROCESS THE FORM!** This is particularly important for college forms: pay particular attention to the tuberculosis requirements/screening questions that colleges have. Medication authorization forms continue to be free of charge, but like forms, require 7-10 days for completion. Once forms or medication authorizations are completed, we will call you to let you know they are ready. We do offer "Rush Forms", which incur a higher charge, but are guaranteed to be ready for pickup within 24 hours—simply let us know if you are requesting that.

12) RECORD RELEASES:

We try our best to process record releases as quickly as possible, but, by law, have 30 days to get these to you. You can print a record release from our website (found under the OUR PRACTICE tab) or we are happy to mail one to you at your request. Once we receive your signed release, we will begin processing your request.

13) TRANSITION OF CARE:

For those patients being seen here when they are age 22, we indicate that it is time to look to transition to an adult primary care provider. At age 23 or older, we consider it necessary for patients to be seen by adult medicine and do not schedule visits for that age group. FYI: We do not take new patients 18 years or older.

14) RESPECT AND KINDNESS:

We believe in the modeling of respectful, kind behavior for all children. Persons choosing to demonstrate aggressive or threatening behavior are not welcome in our practice and will be subject to discharge.

15) ANSWERING SERVICE:

Around the clock, we have dedicated nurses or providers who can answer your questions—when we are not in the office, we have an answering service that will alert us that you have called. IF YOU HAVE LEFT A MESSAGE WITH THE ANSWERING SERVICE AND HAVE NOT HEARD BACK WITHIN A HALF-HOUR, PLEASE CALL THE ANSWERING SERVICE BACK TO ALERT THEM. During our business office hours, we have nurse triage personnel who get back to you as soon as they can, based on the acuity of the call.

16) MANAGERS:

We are dedicated to the care of children and their families and believe that communication regarding misunderstandings helps protect that care. We have managers in place who help sort out problems should they arise—we encourage you to access them if needed.