

Anderson Family Medicine Prescribing Procedures

We are pleased to provide our patients with state-of-the art electronic prescribing, and take pride in our ability to respond to our patients refill requests with same-day or (at the latest) next-day response times. We would like to introduce you to our medication philosophy and procedures regarding your prescription management.

YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF YOUR MEDICATION

We will assist you whenever possible with your medication management, but in the end, only you can really control what medicines you take! For this reason, we ask our patients to carry a current medication list with them, or bring their medicines (in their bottles) with them to every appointment. We keep a current medication list in our electronic medical record for every patient; however, many patients have more than one doctor who prescribes for them, and sometimes medications can get switched during an emergency, or by accident at the pharmacy. Please make us aware any time a change is made, so we can keep your list up to date.

YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF YOUR REFILLS

When you have refills remaining on your prescription, please contact your pharmacy to refill the medicine. **If there are no refills remaining, YOU should contact us directly.** Often we time prescriptions to expire when you are due for an appointment, and the expiring prescription serves as your reminder.

Many pharmacies have “no worry” or “automatic refill” programs, or will tell you they will contact us when you run out of refills. *Here’s how this really works:* They send us a fax. Unfortunately, we receive dozens of faxed refill requests every day which are automatically generated by pharmacy computer systems, and we are unable to determine if the request was generated by you, or by the computer in error, which happens a lot more than it should.

We would like to be able to call patients individually to confirm these refill requests, but due to the sheer number we receive, we regret we are unable to do this. We do tell pharmacists if they personally call that we need to hear from the patient directly to confirm they really need the refill.

We understand this may mean some additional work for you, but for the sake of medical safety we feel it is worth the small inconvenience. We have heard so many stories of patients receiving the wrong medication because of a computer error at the pharmacy, we felt taking this extra step is worth it to our patients.

Because of these risks associated with these automated refills, we strongly advise patients not to participate in such “no worry” refill programs, especially the ones which automatically bill your credit card for mail order pharmacies. You should check their return policy – we have not heard of a single pharmacy which will allow you to return a medication once shipped, and if they have billed your credit card for a medicine you don’t need, you may be stuck without any recourse.

CONFIRM YOUR SHIPMENT

For mail order pharmacies, if we prescribe your medicine electronically, we place a request on every prescription for the pharmacist to contact you personally to confirm the name, dose and price of the medication they are shipping to you. Sadly, this doesn't occur every time, and rarely patients will receive the wrong medication. If this happens, please ask the pharmacist to pull the original request and confirm that you did not hear from them prior to shipment. While they are not permitted to accept the medication back from you in return, sometimes this will put the responsibility on them to replace the erroneous prescription.

THE RISING COST OF MEDICATIONS

Our prescribing philosophy is to recommend medications on the basis of medical need, choosing the best medication for your condition and not based solely on the cost of the medication. We understand, however, that price can be a factor and there may be times you may want to try a less expensive alternative. Depending on the condition and the medicine in question, we may be able to handle this request over the telephone, but in certain circumstances the issues related to dosing, side effects and safety profile, we may require a face-to-face discussion regarding the risks of changing medications. Please call us first, and we will let you know how best to handle your request.

WHEN YOUR PHARMACY OR INSURANCE COMPANY WANTS TO CHANGE YOUR MEDICATION

We commonly receive requests directly from your pharmacy or insurance company asking us to change your medication for non-medical, cost reasons. Sometimes they have discussed this with you, and sometimes they have not and are doing so without your permission. Sometimes the difference between the drugs may only be a few dollars, and you might wish to pay the extra amount for the "better" drug we prescribed. For this reason, we always like to give our patients the option to personally manage the medication we have chosen for them, and decide for themselves if the switch is acceptable.

If a pharmacist calls our office to request a change in your medication, we will ask them to have you call us directly for permission to make this switch.

They will be able to give you more information regarding any price differences between the medications in question. If you have any questions with regards to what medications your insurance may or may not cover ahead of time, please contact your pharmacist or insurance company, who will have an up-to-date list