

# Office Policies and Procedures

Betsy Salsbury Merrell, M.D., P.L.L.C.

## Office Hours

Monday through Thursday: 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. Friday: 8:30 A.M. to 12 P.M.

## Before Your Visit

Before your appointment please contact your referring physician and request that a copy of your medical record (including pertinent lab and radiology information) be sent to our office via hand-delivery, mail or fax. Also, please be sure to include an accurate list of all your current medications and dosages, including over-the-counter medications and vitamins/supplements.

## Emergency Care

If you need emergency care after office hours or if an emergency arises during office hours, **please go directly to the nearest emergency room or dial 911**. Your problem will be evaluated by the emergency room physician on duty who will perform the procedures necessary to stabilize your condition and will then contact the physician on call for my office.

## Specific Non-emergency Questions Regarding Your Care

Routine questions regarding your care should be discussed with me at your next scheduled office appointment. If you feel that a more immediate answer is required, please call my office during normal working hours.

For after-hour care, a physician is always available to speak with you. Dr. Merrell currently shares call with two other family physicians, Dr. Dan Veazey and Dr. Bruce Gilpin. If you need to speak with the on-call physician covering Dr. Merrell's practice, please call the Pardee Hospital operator at (828) 696-1000.

## Test Results

The results of many laboratory tests, x-rays, scans, and biopsies are received by my office weekly. Due to this large volume, it may take up to 2 weeks to receive results of your tests. If anything comes back significantly abnormal, we will notify you as soon as possible. If all is well, you will usually receive a letter or telephone call from our staff. If anything is abnormal or needs further discussion or instruction, a member of my staff will notify you. If you have heard nothing from our office in three weeks, **do not assume that "no news is good news."** **You are responsible for calling at this point to obtain the results of any tests ordered by me.**

## Pain Medications

Our office policy on pain medications and anxiolytic medications is as follows: If you are new to the practice, no pain or anxiolytic medications will be prescribed at the initial office visit. Our practice does not routinely manage chronic pain medications or chronic anxiolytic medication. It will be up to Dr. Merrell's discretion, whether or not we will prescribe you any current pain or anxiolytic medication.

## Medical Records

The accuracy of your medical record is essential to providing quality medical care. Prior to your first appointment you will be asked to complete a medical history questionnaire. This questionnaire will be mailed to you along with other relevant information about my office.

Please remember that accuracy and completeness is of utmost importance. Any changes in your health status, medications or allergies should be brought to our attention and appropriate changes made in your personal medical record

Occasionally, we receive requests for copies of patient's medical records. Since your medical record is a confidential document, no information will be released without your authorization. All copies are made by my office staff once per week. Therefore requests for copies of medical records should be made well in advance of your anticipated need. There may be a charge for copying records.

## Hospitals and Referrals

Patients are referred to any hospital system or specialty group for which the patient prefers. Dr. Merrell maintains hospital privileges at Pardee Hospital in Hendersonville, NC. Patients who are seen in the office and require hospitalization, will be admitted directly to Pardee Hospital by Dr. Merrell On evenings and weekends through the Pardee Hospital emergency room, the TST Hospitalist Service admits Dr. Merrell's patients to Pardee Hospital. Dr. Merrell then provides inpatient services for the remainder of the patient's stay.

## Prescription Renewals

Prescriptions may be refilled in one of two ways:

- By phoning my office between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM daily
- By requesting that your pharmacy call my office

Refill requests should be made **at least two days** before your current supply of medication runs out. An annual office visit is required for patients on long-term medical therapy. Therefore, prescription refills will not be approved for any patient who has not been seen once during the previous calendar year.

Prescriptions for all classes of pain medication, anxiolytic medication or antibiotics will not be refilled by the weekend on-call physician. Any patient requiring a pain medication, anxiolytic medication or antibiotic on a weekend should be seen by the physician on-call, or at urgent care or the emergency room.

## Fees, Payments, and Insurance

Payments are expected at the time of service. Billing is handled by Medical Business Resources in Asheville, NC. This group may assist you with billing questions by calling, (828) 250-2899 or (800) 324-2063. We do expect full payment on all accounts within 60 days unless other arrangements have been approved.

Dr. Merrell participates in Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, Crescent, Medcost, Medicaid for children, Medicare, and United Health Care, and am also a member of various other insurance plans. You may call your insurance plan or my office to see if I am a participant of your plan. Our office staff would be happy to provide you with an estimate of your anticipated care in advance.

Please remember that the agreement you have with your insurance company does not affect your responsibility for payment and all fees are ultimately due from you. Even PPOs require a co-payment, deductible, or sometimes a balance for non-covered services. Please be prepared to pay your co-payment at the time of service.