



OFFICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CONSENT TO TREAT POLICY

I have the legal right to consent to medical and surgical treatments for this patient. I voluntarily authorize and consent to the medical care, treatment and diagnostic tests that providers of Southwest Children's Center, P.A. believe are necessary for my child. I give permission to the doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers in this medical office to provide treatment to this child as long as my child/children are a patient of this practice.

Parent/legal guardians must be present for all children under the age of 18. Anyone other than the parent/legal guardian accompanying the patient to the visit in the absence of a parent/legal guardian must be authorized (on the Minor Authorization Form) to bring your child to the visit.

APPOINTMENTS

We see patients, by appointment, seven days a week. Patients should not expect to be seen without a scheduled appointment. If you arrive without an appointment, you may not be able to see the physician. Walk-in patients and late arrivals greatly decrease the efficiency of our physicians and are unfair to patients who are on time and have scheduled appointments. Additional fees apply to any patient who arrives to our office without an appointment. "Walk-in" patients may be worked into the daily schedule as time allows.

We ask that patients and families arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled appointment. For families with multiple children, each patient must have a separate appointment. It is best to schedule non-urgent appointments, such as well check-ups, sports/camp physicals, and parent consultations at least two weeks in advance.

As a courtesy to our patients, we provide an automated text message appointment reminder two days prior to the scheduled appointment. Standard text message rates may apply. Appointment reminders are *courtesy* notifications. Patients and families are responsible for arriving to their appointments on the correct day, at the correct time. Appointments scheduled less than 2 days prior to their appointment will not receive a reminder text.

PRE-CHECK-IN

Pre-check-in greatly increases the efficiency of your check-in and visit. Families get the convenience of updating their demographic and insurance information, which reduces transcription errors and minimizes paperwork and time at the front desk upon your arrival. Pre-check-in text message alerts will be sent prior to your child's scheduled appointment. Please complete the pre-check-in process through your child's patient portal prior to your arrival for your child's appointment.

LATE ARRIVALS

Your timeliness affects our ability to provide our patients with efficient medical care. Thus, our office has little tolerance for late arrivals. If you arrive late for a non-urgent visit, we may have to reschedule your appointment. If you are running late for your appointment, we kindly ask you notify our office. If you are more than 15 minutes late to your appointment, your appointment may need to be rescheduled.

Excessive late arrivals could result in dismissal from Southwest Children's Center, P.A.



MISSED APPOINTMENTS/CANCELLATIONS

We work hard to offer our patients appointments that are convenient for both you and your children. Missed appointments cost other patients who could have been seen in the timeframe set aside for you. Cancellations are requested **2 hours** in advance for all standard (15 Minute appointments) and **24 hours** prior to any extended appointment (30 Minute appointments). "No Show" Fees will apply to all visits that are missed or not cancelled within the timeframe stated below.

15 Minute Appointments (Well Child/Preventative, Sick Visits, ADD/ADHD, etc.) (Require 2-hour cancellation)	\$50.00 Fee
30-Minute Appointments (ADD/ADHD, parent consults, etc.) (Require 24-hour cancellation)	\$50.00 Fee

Excessive missed appointments will result in dismissal from Southwest Children's Center, P.A.

WELL VISIT SCHEDULE

Regular well-child visits are one of the most important things you can do to keep your child healthy. Well child visits also provide you with the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your child's health. Your child should have a well child visit at the interval listed on our website and on the Routine Well Visit & Vaccine Schedule on page 17 of this packet. More detailed information regarding the visits can be found on our website. We recommend that you call the office or schedule online 2 months or more in advance to schedule with your child's primary care provider on the date that best fits your needs.

If during the well-child visit, there are any abnormal symptoms, diagnoses, medication refills or additional examination due to an acute illness or chronic condition, the physician is required to document these items in your child's medical chart with additional codes that may result in an Office Visit charge in addition to your wellness exam. In these cases, your insurance may require you to pay the contracted co-pay, deductible, co-insurance based upon the specifics of your individual plan benefits.

SICK VISITS

SWCC strives to see your children for all their sick needs. We STRONGLY believe that fragmented medical care (urgent care, insurance company teledocs and pharmacy clinics) is suboptimal medical care. To make accessing us convenient when your child is sick, SWCC offers same day sick appointments. Same day sick appointments are available 7 days a week. This includes Saturday and Sunday mornings and most holidays.

ONLINE SCHEDULING

Your health is our priority and now scheduling your appointment is easier than ever! We offer convenient online scheduling, allowing you to book a visit at a time that works best for you. Skip the phone lines and secure your child's well or sick appointment in just a few clicks through your child's portal.

Online scheduling is not available for all visits and physicians. Certain visits and limiting factors may require you to contact the office to schedule your appointment.

Please keep in mind that pre-scheduled appointments between 8-10 a.m. that are not cancelled the day prior (if unable to attend) are subject to the Missed Appointment Fee.



TELEMEDICINE APPOINTMENTS

The physicians of Southwest Children's Center feel strongly that the best medicine is practiced in person; however, in certain circumstances, a telemedicine appointment may be recommended or offered by our phone triage staff. If a telemedicine appointment is offered, additional forms will be required prior to the visit. Failure to complete the required forms or appear for the telemedicine appointment will result in a Missed Appointment Fee.

WEEKDAY CLINIC HOURS

Our office is open 7 days a week.

Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

AFTER-HOURS CALL

After the clinic closes, our families may utilize the Methodist Children's Hospital Nurse Triage Service at (210) 22-NURSE [226-8773] for medical-related questions. A designated Southwest Children's physician is available for any calls needing a physician's attention which is routed through our after-hours answering service.

WEEKEND APPOINTMENTS

Weekend appointments are available for urgent care and acutely ill-established patients. On weekends, we open and begin scheduling appointments at 8 a.m. The office closes at 12 noon or after the last scheduled appointment (whichever comes first).

All patients *must* have an appointment to be seen. Online scheduling may not be available on weekends.

On the weekends, there will be a convenience fee billed to your insurance. If the fee is not covered by your insurance, you may be responsible.

HOLIDAY APPOINTMENTS

Our office is closed on New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Our office is usually open for urgent care and acutely-ill established patients on all other holidays.

On select holidays, we are open and begin taking appointments at 8 a.m. The office closes at 12 noon or after the last scheduled appointment (whichever comes first). On holidays, there will be a convenience fee billed to your insurance. If the fee is not covered by your insurance, you may be responsible.

All patients must have an appointment to be seen. Online scheduling may not be available on holidays.

PATIENT PORTAL

Southwest Children's Center, P.A.'s patient portal is available for all patients and families. We strongly urge parents and legal guardians to obtain access to their child's patient portal. On our portal, you may view your upcoming visits, view your child's medical record, view, print or email their vaccination record, communicate with our office, complete the pre-check-in process and make payments. To obtain access to your child's medical records, please request access from one of our front office specialists.



NURSE TRIAGE

As a convenience to our patients, our experienced phone triage staff is available to you during office hours to answer medical questions or concerns. Our experienced triage staff can provide symptom management and guidance, advise when medical care is necessary and directly communicate with your physician for your child's medical needs.

You can reach one of our experienced triage team through the phone triage line. You may also utilize the patient portal to communicate a non-urgent phone triage inquiry to our nursing staff. Turnaround time for non-urgent inquiries is 72 hours. The non-urgent phone triage inquiry portal message is not intended for emergencies or acute illnesses requiring immediate or timely assistance.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS/FORM COMPLETION

Our patient portal offers you a convenient 24-hour means to request refills for certain chronic illnesses, such as ADD/ADHD, Asthma, Allergy and Mental Health. The turnaround time for processing all prescription refills is 2-3 business days.

Please also utilize the portal for the completion of medical forms for your child. The turnaround time for the completion of forms (listed below) is 3-5 business days.

- FMLA
- Daycare Form
- Camp Forms
- Asthma Action Plans
- Medication Forms
- Sports Physical Forms

Should you need your form sooner than 3-5 business days, you may expedite your request for an additional fee. Certain forms may not be eligible for expedited processing.

REFERRALS

Our office has a dedicated referral team to assist our established families with their referral needs. Families are encouraged to utilize the patient portal for referral requests for inquiries for their child. Portal requests for referrals are always processed in a non-urgent manner. Typical turnaround time for a referral request is 2-4 business days.

Should you have an urgent referral or a referral issue needing immediate attention, you may call our referral department directly at (210) 614-8687 ext. 2507.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Southwest Children's Center, P.A. follows the immunization guidelines recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Advisory Committee on Immunization, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the State of Texas. As healthcare professionals, we strongly believe that all children should follow the vaccination schedule and that not adhering to this schedule can put your children and others at risk for preventable serious illnesses or death.



E-PRESCRIBING

Our office utilizes electronic prescription prescribing (e-prescribing) which electronically transmits your child's prescriptions to the pharmacy of your choice. E-Prescribing minimizes errors, increases efficiency and reduces lost prescriptions. Make sure to provide the correct pharmacy information during your child's visit.

PATIENTS OVER THE AGE OF 18

Once patients reach the legal age of 18, he/she becomes legally authorized to make his/her own medical decisions. An authorization form must be signed by them giving Southwest Children's Center legal authority to release medical information to the parent/legal guardian.

REQUESTING RECORDS

Should you need any part of your child's medical records released, you will need to complete the "Authorization to Disclose PHI" Form, available on the patient portal and on our website. This form must be completed in its entirety in order to be processed. Fees may apply for the request of medical records. Please allow up to 15 days for the processing of your child's medical records request. Should you need your child's medical records sooner, you may expedite your request for an additional fee.

E-NEWSLETTER AND EMAILS

Occasionally our office will send out e-newsletters and important e-mails notifying of upcoming events, such as weekend influenza clinics, or arrival of the influenza vaccine at our clinic. Be sure to opt-in for the e-newsletter and important email alerts on your new patient packet to stay up to date.

TEXT MESSAGE

Southwest Children's Center utilizes text messaging for appointment reminders, billing notifications, collection alerts, portal, notifications, and general office notices. If you opt out of receiving text notifications, you opt out of all text messages from Southwest Children's Center. It is extremely important that you consider NOT OPTING OUT of receiving these notifications as this will compromise our ability to reach you.

EAR PIERCING

Ear piercings are available for children aged 3 months and up. Patients must be up to date with their vaccinations prior to piercing. Southwest Children's Center, P.A. utilizes the Blomdahl® Medical Ear-Piercing System, a system only available to physicians, which offers sterile equipment and nickel-free, hypoallergenic earrings to minimize the health risks associated with ear piercing. All ear piercings are performed by physicians within the office.



PREVENTATIVE CARE CONSENT

A normal, routine physical examination will only include Preventative care. For further explanation, please contact your insurance company directly. The Affordable Care Act initiated that insurance plans cover the Preventative visits at 100%. It is important to understand that during your preventative care visit, the physician will be following all guidelines set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics for the age of your child. The Affordable Care Act does not govern the components of the preventative visit, and depending upon your individual plan benefits, your insurance company may process one or more components to your deductible or as an out-of-pocket expense (e.g. vision screening, fluoride varnish, health risk surveys) which are required by our medical governing bodies.

If there are any abnormal symptoms, diagnoses, medication refills or other examination due to acute illness, the physician is required to document these items in your child's medical chart with additional codes that may result in an Office Visit charge in addition to your Preventative exam. In these cases, the insurance may require you to pay the contracted co-pay, deductible, co-insurance or additional funds based upon the specifics of your individual plan benefits.



POLICY FOR DIVORCED OR SEPARATED PARENTS

Our focus is on your child's medical, emotional, psychological and physiological health. We are not party to nor wish to be involved in any legal issues involving divorce, separation, or custody agreements.

- The Physicians, nurses, medical assistants, office and billing staff will not be put in the middle of domestic issues or disagreements over the phone or in the office.
- Please make decisions regarding appointments, vaccinating and/or any office procedures PRIOR to visiting our practice.
- Only in situations where there is a confirmed, documented **Court Order** will one of the parents be denied access to the minor child's health records or visits at the office. Southwest Children's Center must have a copy of this Court Order on file in the minor child's electronic medical record.
- If there is NOT a court order on file with our office, either parent or legal guardian can sign a "Minor Authorization" form and authorize any named individuals to bring your child to our practice, be present during the visit and consent to treatment during that visit. We will not be involved in any disputes regarding named individuals on the consent forms unless instructed by the court. Either parent or legal guardian can schedule an appointment for their child, be present for the visit, and/or obtain a copy of the visit summary.
- It is the responsibility of both parents to communicate with each other about the patient's care, office visit dates and any other pertinent information relevant to the patient. It is not the responsibility of the provider to communicate visit information to each custodial parent separately. Our providers will not call the non-attending parent following visits.
- Additionally, we will not call the other parent for consent regarding appointments scheduled, restrict either parent's involvement in the patient's care unless authorized by law, or tolerate appointment scheduling/canceling patterns of behavior between parents.
- Furthermore, payments, including copays, deductibles, coinsurance or any additional fees charged by your insurance are due at the time of service regardless of which parent is responsible for medical expenses. We are **not** a party to your divorce agreement. We will collect payment from the parent who brings the child to their visit. If the divorce decree requires the other parent to pay all or part of the treatment costs, it is the authorizing parent's responsibility to collect from the other parent. Any disputes about payment that end up in the collection process, will be due at the next time of service or the patient will not be seen and could be dismissed from Southwest Children's Center.
- If we feel any of the above points are becoming an issue at the office, and/or compromising patient care, we have the right to discharge the family from the practice.



CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY FOR PARENTS AND PATIENTS

In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for staff, visitors, patients, and their families, Southwest Children's Center expects visitors, patients, and accompanying guests or family members to refrain from unacceptable behaviors that are disruptive or pose a threat to the rights or safety of other patients or staff.

*Adults are expected to supervise children in their care.

The following behaviors are not permitted. This list is inclusive, but not limited to:

- Physical assault or inflicting bodily harm
- Throwing objects
- Climbing on furniture*
- Coloring on furniture, books, counters or walls
- Making verbal threats to harm another individual or destroy property
- Intentionally damaging equipment or property
- Making menacing or inappropriate gestures
- Inappropriate language (i.e. cursing)
- Attempting to intimidate or harass other individuals (including staff)
- Making harassing, offensive or intimidating statements, or threats of violence through phone calls, letters, voicemail, email or other form of written, verbal or electronic communication
- Racial or cultural slurs or other derogatory remarks associated with but not limited to race, language, gender or sexuality

If you are subjected to any of these behaviors or witness inappropriate behavior, please report to any staff member. Violators are subject to removal from the office and/or discharge from the practice.



FORM FEES

Allergy Form	\$10.00
Asthma Action Plan/ Medication Form	\$10.00
Billing Ledgers/ Duplicate receipts	\$5.00
Physician Letter	\$15.00
FMLA Paperwork*	\$25.00 per set of forms
Generic physical form (copy)	\$10.00
Immunization Record (free on patient portal)	\$5.00
Handicap Form (if notary required)	\$5.00 \$15.00
Medical Records (to patient) (first 25 pages)	\$25.00
Each additional page	\$.50
Medical Records (to another ofc)	No charge
Misc. Letters/Forms	\$25.00
Narrative	\$100.00
Notary Public Fees (first signature)	\$10.00
Additional signatures	\$1.00
School Medication Forms	\$10.00
Sports Forms/Daycare Forms Sports/Physical//Camp Forms	\$10.00
(Additional form fee with Physical form)	\$5.00
Guardianship or Military Paperwork*	\$25.00 per set of forms

Additional fee of \$25.00 for all rush forms. (24-hour turnaround time)
 Some forms are not eligible for expedited processing.*