



Bambini Pediatrics PC

Wholesome Medical Care for Kids

OFFICE POLICIES

Updated 1/4/2010

Registration

Prior to being seen at the first visit, all parents should complete the following documents: registration form, pediatric history questionnaire, HIPAA consent, office policy acknowledgement, and medical record release. Parents of newborns may omit the record release. Ideally, these forms should be downloaded from the website and filled out at a convenient moment.

If submitting these forms to us in advance by fax, scanner, or paper mail, please consider including a photocopy of your insurance card. On the registration form, instead of filling in all those numbers, simply write “see insurance card.”

Appointments

How long are the appointments? For those families that have health insurance, and that is still most of us, it is somewhat necessary to go with the following guidelines. Checkups are 20 minutes, that’s whether your child enjoys extraordinary health, whether she has enormously complex and multiple health problems, or whether mom/ dad have zillions of questions and concerns. If you think you’ll need more time, get the basic checkup over with and plan a follow up visit – or several – to address all the concerns.

Likewise, simple acute problems like an earache or sore throat usually are allotted a 10 minute slot. To help keep us running on time, please try to avoid bringing up troubles with siblings or multiple other health problems – esp. during flu season!

For chronic or complex health problems (e.g. autism, bipolar, fatigue, suspected abuse, etc.), feel free to request a 30 minute visit or longer. Bear in mind, it may take this may limit the scheduling options a bit.

Cancellations

Our staff will make reminder phone calls a day or so prior to visits scheduled well in advance. We do require at least 24 business-hour notice to cancel a booked appointment. Weekends/ holidays are not currently business days for Bambini. Certain exceptions do apply (e.g. snowstorm, power failure, traffic accident, etc). In the event of a no-show, there is a \$50 cancellation charge. For less than 24 hour notice, we will attempt to fill the slot. If successful, we will waive the fee.

Likewise, families that arrive more than 20 minutes late for their visit may be asked to reschedule, although no fee would be charged. If our office is running more than an hour behind, due to emergencies, our staff will make every effort to notify you to discuss options.

Families that repeatedly do not show or are late for appointments may be asked to meet with the practice manager.

After-Hours Care (Important)

Bambini is a little different from large pediatric practices you may have visited in the past – mostly in good ways we hope 😊 But as of January 2010, we have only one doctor – on call 24/7. He is basically available only to hospitals, pharmacies, and other doctors. Dr. Foster has offered some limited emergency back-up for hospital matters.

We are not able to offer evening office hours, weekend hours, or middle-of-the-night advice. Use your best judgment as parent to discern whether or not to treat the matter at home, seek urgent care, or go to the emergency room. Although our doctor currently only has privileges at Vassar, if the situation is dire, proceed to the closest facility.

There are several options for urgent care in the area. These currently include:

- [Express Pediatrics](#) in Hopewell Junction
- [First Care](#) in Highland
- [Emergency One](#) in Hyde Park

Please check to see if your insurance company participates before making a visit.

Advice Calls & E-mails

Unlike attorneys, accountants, engineers, and most other professionals, doctors generally *do not bill* for time spent on the phone or answering email. Insurance companies just don't pay for this service. So, please be understanding if we ask you to come in to discuss that constipation problem rather than working through it on the phone or email.

If you do not have insurance, and are willing to be billed for phone-session appointments, please let us know. We will be set up on Skype – with webcam for video conferencing as well. This may allow you to avoid missing work or allow your child to avoid missing school.

Moreover, we will have only one nurse working through the day. When not taking histories, obtaining vital signs, or administering treatments, they will try to return advice calls or emails of a straightforward nature.

Email is becoming an increasingly useful means of communicating between families and the doctors office. Bear in mind it is not appropriate for urgent, complicated, or sensitive matters. Email correspondence becomes part of the medical record.

Prenatal/ Get-Acquainted visits

Although many parents find these visits extremely useful – and doctors enjoy them too, again – sad to say, they are generally not reimbursed by third parties. We hope to post further information for expecting mothers on this website, including matters such as third trimester nutrition, the vitamin K shot, what to do with vernix, and when to clamp the umbilical cord.

As of January 2010, we will not charge for these visits. But that is likely to change.

Forms and Letters

A copy of the physical exam for daycare, school, or college - as well as a record of vaccines administered, will be given to you on request following the checkup. Likewise, a note for missing school/work, taking meds, excuse from gym, use of inhaler at school, etc. – all these notes will be provided following an urgent visit at which these matters are addressed.

If you need a new note for a class trip, summer camp, change of babysitter, etc., there will be a \$5 fee for each form requested – if not completed in the context of an office visit.

If your child needs a letter from the doctor for CSE, SSI, etc., there is a \$10 fee associated. Please email drafts for these letters to us: info@bambini-peds.com.

Medical Home/ Divorce Situations

In an ideal world, all children would grow up in happy homes with two parents to nurture them. With glowing health, they would only go one doctor – just for an occasional check up. And, of course, only one parent would have to work – and their health insurance would be fully-covered by their employer. But here we are in the 21st century!

If your family situation is a little complicated, we can understand and try to work with you. Bear in mind that you may have to notify your insurance company by phone or through a website that you are switching primary doctor if, for instance, while living with dad in Connecticut your daughter sees a certain pediatrician over there, and then you wish to bring her to us for a follow-up or second opinion.

In these situations, it would be very helpful to have in writing which parent has primary custody for medical decisions. Moreover, in complex situations such as ongoing family court cases, it is important for us to have in writing which parent is financially responsible for our care.

Finally, if there is an order of protection, or if a non-custodial parent is not permitted to have access to medical information, we would also need to have that in writing from an official source.

Fees for DME, Office Procedures, and Labs

As you know, despite skyrocketing premiums, insurance companies are getting stickier than ever about what they will or will not pay for. Moreover, we realize that many families do not have health insurance, and that growing numbers have very high deductible plans. If we recommend a throat culture, wart treatment, ace bandage, tetanus shot, etc., do not be afraid to ask in advance how much it would cost. Likewise, more insurance companies are cutting back on reimbursement for vision and hearing tests. If you would like us to omit these at the time of a check up, that is okay.

Payment for Service

Although you may complete a credit card authorization before your visit, we generally wish to settle charges after the visit. Cash, personal check, VISA/MC, debit cards, & Discover are accepted.

Patients without insurance (self-pay) will receive a discount for payment at the time of service. If payment is not paid on the day of service, a billing fee of \$10 will be added to the account. Families with high-deductible plans cannot receive a discount from our fee schedule (HMO's get upset). So it goes...

If there is a balance on your account, especially if it is longstanding, you may be asked to come a few minutes early and care for the matter prior to seeing the doctor. Bambini, due to limited billing staff, will not be able to provide payment plans and such. On the plus side, you will not get annoying phone calls about a balance.

Professional Courtesy

Although a time-honored traditions, government agencies and health insurance companies frown on this practice. Unless the situation is extraordinary, Bambini will not waive co-payments or other out-of-pocket expenses for children with a parent who practices medicine.

Returned Checks

Like most financial institutions, our bank charges us a hefty fee for "bounced" checks. We, in turn, must pass this fee along if the check is returned to us for lack of funds. There would also be a \$10 service charge.

Consent to Treatment

Most office appointments with a pediatrician include some type of treatment. At checkups, for instance, immunizations are often recommended. At sick visits, treatments might involve medication given in the office like a nebulizer treatment or a prescription for an antibiotic to take at home. We are not going to request that you sign a form for every treatment that you accept or refuse.

It is important that you understand the benefits, risks, and alternatives associated with each treatment recommendation. At times, we may forget to outline these for you. Feel free to ask us if more information is needed to reach a thoughtful decision.

Finally, there is the matter of mature minors. New York State does have guidelines that we must follow. They don't necessarily always make sense. For instance, to do a throat culture on your seventeen year-old son, we should have parental permission. To perform a pregnancy test on his fourteen year-old sister, we do not. And if she asks that mom and dad are not given the results, we have to abide by the request.

There is a lot here to consider, and we've probably missed a couple items. But thank you for your attention. We look forward to working with you.

Attestation

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have reviewed and understand the Bambini Pediatrics Office Policies listed above.

Patient Name

Parent Name

Date

Parent Signature