

Prescription Refill Policy

Effective 9/10/12, revised 3/15/13

Currently, our office receives a large-volume of calls and faxes daily for medication refill requests. Our office can no longer safely manage this volume of phone and fax requests. As of September 10, 2012, we have a new prescription refill policy. We understand that this is a change for both you and us. We hope to work together to ensure safe, efficient and high-quality medical care. Thank you for being our valued patient!

It is typically my practice to give prescriptions with refills for 6 months at a time to coincide with six-month followup appointments for monitoring. It is very important to request your prescriptions during your routine office visits. In order to ensure that you do not run out of your medications, please make sure to schedule a followup appointment at the end of each visit. If office visits are scheduled and kept on a regular basis, prescriptions are refilled at these visits, and pharmacies follow instructions on prescriptions given, then requests for refills outside of office visits should rarely occur.

As of September 10, 2012, requests made for prescription refills made outside of an office visit may be subject to a fee:

1. \$15.00 may be charged for 1-3 prescription refills that or not requested during an office visit
2. \$25.00 may be charged for 4+ prescription refills that are not requested during an office visit.

To request a refill, please leave a detailed message on our refill request voicemail. **Please allow 2 business days for refill requests to be completed.**

Ways to reduce unnecessary refill requests and medication errors:

1. We do require office visits on a regular basis for all of our patients taking prescription medication. The interval for followup will vary depending on the type of medication you are prescribed. Please be sure you have enough medication to last until your next scheduled visit.
2. Before you come to your regular appointment, you should look over your medications, diabetic supplies, inhalers etc. to determine if you need to request any new prescriptions at your appointment.
3. Please bring all of your prescription bottles with you to your appointment. This is important to make sure that you're taking the correct medications in the correct dosages. We will take the time to carefully review your medications and write for refills at your office visit.
4. It is your responsibility to schedule a followup appointment before you run out of your medication. We recommend you schedule your next visit before you leave our office.
5. If you are changing pharmacies, you can usually have your new pharmacy request prescriptions be transferred from your old pharmacy.

“Auto-Renewal”, “Auto-Fax”, “Readyfill” etc.

Most of the requests for refills that we receive are generated automatically from the pharmacy without the patient's knowledge. "Auto-renewal" or "Auto-Fax" programs with most pharmacies are at fault for most of these requests. ***As of March 15, 2013, we will no longer respond to refill requests that are faxed from the pharmacy. If you are in need of a refill we expect you to contact us directly and leave a detailed message on our Refill Request Voicemail.***

Reasoning:

From my research, the main benefit for "auto renewal" is for the pharmacy. This generates a constant stream of cash flow for pharmacies and often does not benefit the patient. It is my experience that when we receive "Auto-renewal" refill requests from the pharmacy, the patient usually still has medication and is not actually in need of refill. In many cases, the pharmacy is requesting a refill on behalf of the patient without their knowledge and may be billing insurance for the medication regardless of whether the prescription was picked up by the patient. Refilling prescriptions without a patient's approval raises the possibility of insurance fraud, state officials say. According to the *L.A. Times*, one national pharmacy chain is under federal investigation for this very reason.

“Auto Renewal” also increases chance for medication errors. Consider this common example:

“In the past few weeks we heard from a patient utilizing the automatic refill system who picked up three prescriptions but later called the pharmacy to report he had picked up a blood pressure pill called Norvasc, which his doctor had previously discontinued. Fortunately, he hadn't yet taken any. In another case a patient's Cardizem, a heart medication, was increased from 240 mg to 360 mg. The elderly gentleman purchased the new prescription for diltiazem 360 mg but also received the diltiazem 240 mg prescription that had been filled earlier through the automatic refill program. After receiving a call from the confused patient, the pharmacist contacted the patient's doctor to determine which strength the patient should be receiving. Had the patient accidentally taken both strengths of Cardizem, it could have caused serious heart or blood pressure complications.”

Acknowledgement of Receipt:

Patient Signature _____

Date _____