

NOTICE OF HEALTH INFORMATION PRACTICES

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed, and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Seattle OB/GYN Group respects your privacy. We understand that your personal health information is very sensitive.

The law protects the privacy of the health information we create and obtain in providing our care and services to you. Each time you visit a hospital, physician, or other health care provider a record of your visit is made. Typically, your protected health information (PHI) includes your symptoms, examination, test results, diagnoses, treatment and a plan for future care of treatment. This information serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment
- Means of communication among health professionals who contribute to your care
- Legal document describing the care you received
- Source of information for public health officials
- Means by which you or your health insurance plan can verify that services billed were actually provided, to provide authorizations and issue payment
- Tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve

Examples of Use and Disclosures of Protected Health Information for Treatment, Payment, and Health Operations not requiring consent:

For treatment:

- Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other member of our health care team is recorded in your medical record and used to help determine care
- The treatment, coordination and management of your care may be disclosed to others who are also involved in your care
- The referral to another provider or testing facility

For payment:

- Activities conducted by the practice to obtain reimbursement for healthcare services. This includes, among others, billing, claims management, collection activities, verification of insurance coverage and pre-certification of services.

Other uses and disclosures:

- Business associates including consultants, lawyers, medical transcriptionists, and off-site storage companies who are directly involved with medical records
- The Food and Drug Administration, for public health purposes
- The Health Department for reporting communicable diseases
- Reporting to employers for work-related illness or injuries
- Reporting abuse, neglect or domestic violence
- To avert a serious threat to health or safety of an individual
- As required in response to a court order, subpoena or by police

- For Disaster Relief or National Security purposes
- To the Military Authorities

For health care operations:

- We use your medical records to assess quality and improve services.
- We may use and disclose medical records to review the qualifications and performance of our health care providers and to train our staff.
- We may contact you to remind you about appointments, test results and give you information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services.
- We may use and disclose your information to conduct or arrange for services, including:
 - Medical quality review by your health plan;
 - Accounting, legal, risk management, and insurance services;
 - Audit functions, including fraud and abuse detection and compliance programs.
 - Accreditation, certification, credentialing and licensing activities

All other uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization.

Your Health Information Rights

The health and billing records we create and store are the property of the practice/health care facility. However, you have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your personal health information.

You may exercise any of these rights by contacting our Medical Records Department.

Special Authorizations: Federal and state laws that provide special protections for certain kinds of personal health information (such as information about sexually transmitted and other communicable diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, certain mental health services) call for specific authorizations from you to disclose information. When your personal health information falls under these special protections, we will secure the required authorizations to comply with these laws.

Medical Records: You have the right to inspect and receive copies of your medical records.

Restrict use: You may request in writing that we not use or disclose your information for treatment, payment and operation purposes (TPO) except when specifically authorized by you, when required by law, or in emergency circumstances. We will consider your request but are not legally required to accept it.

We will not reveal details about your appointments, test results, treatment or diagnosis to your spouse or another family member without your permission. We will not leave detailed messages with a third party or answering machine unless you give permission.

Receive confidential communications: You have the right to receive confidential communication by alternate means or locations. This includes alternative mailing addresses, voice mails or emails.

Please note, our office does not routinely use e-mail for communication regarding sensitive medical information. We will strive to read e-mails from patients in a prompt manner. We cannot guarantee that a particular e-mail will be read within a specific time period. It will not be opened if there is a question of its origination.

Request corrections: You have the right to request that we correct information in your record that you believe is incorrect or add information that you believe is missing.

Know about disclosures: You have the right to request and receive a list of instances when we have disclosed information for reasons other than treatment, payment or related administrative purposes.

Complaints: If you are concerned that we have violated your privacy, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your record, you may contact our Privacy Officer at (206) 682-5800.

You may also send a written complaint to the Washington State Department of Health 510 Fourth Avenue West, Suite 404, Seattle, WA. 98119.

We respect your right to file a complaint with us or with the Washington State Department of Health. If you complain, we will not retaliate against you.

You may also contact the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you feel your privacy rights have been violated.

This notice is effective as of April 1, 2003. We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice provisions effective for all personal health information we maintain. You have a right to request a copy of the practice's *Notice of Privacy Practices*. The revised notice will be posted at our place of business and on our website at www.seaobgyn.com.