



**HERE WE GROW**  
PEDIATRICS

## **Email/SMS Correspondence Policy**

Patients may want to use email or other electronic formats to facilitate communication. Federal regulations impose a "duty to warn" patients of risks associated with unencrypted email. Here We Grow Pediatrics must document in the medical record that patients have been advised that email and text communications could potentially be read by a third party. Upon receipt and documentation of this notification, the patient has the right to request communication via email or text.

### **Risk of using email/text include, but are not limited, to:**

- Email may be forwarded, printed, and stored in numerous paper and electronic forms.
- Email may be sent to the wrong address by either party.
- Email may be easier to forge than handwritten or signed papers.
- Copies of email may exist even after the sender or the receiver has deleted his or her copy.
- Email service providers have a right to archive and inspect emails.
- Email may be intercepted, altered, or used without detection or authorization.
- Email delivery is not guaranteed.

### **Patients are responsible for:**

- Agreeing not to use email for medical emergencies or sending time-sensitive information.
- Following up with our office if they have not received a response to an email within a reasonable time period.
- Informing our office of any changes to an email address.
- Informing Our office in writing if they decide to discontinue using email or text communications.

### **Secure electronic communications:**

- Where feasible, patients should be directed to use their patient portal for messaging with their providers.
- Or, patients are urged to download the "Spruce: Medical Communications" app. The app is HIPAA compliant, and secure. After creating an account and using our office's main line to be connected with us, you're able to text us safely and securely regarding patient information.

Patients may request to be contacted via other electronic formats like texting. If a patient requests to be contacted via text message, HWG must warn the patient of the risks of using a text message (the message is sent in plain text and may be intercepted, forwarded, stored in multiple locations, and delivery is not guaranteed) and document in the medical record that patients have been advised of the associated risks. If the patient still requests that text messaging be used and the technology for accommodating this request is available, brief text messaging using the minimum necessary information may be used. (example: "Your appointment has been set for 4/4/14 at 10:30 am").