



CHILDREN'S CLINIC PATIENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Children's Clinic! Thank you for choosing us to be a part of your child's healthcare team. We look forward to working with you to make sure your children receive the care they need to help keep them healthy and happy. Our goal is to provide and maintain a good provider-patient relationship.

Our Mission:

We are highly-trained providers and staff who deliver **comprehensive, patient-centered, and confidence-inspiring** care from birth through our patient's teenage years.

Our practice uses evidenced-based guidelines to provide personalized primary, preventative, and health maintenance care as well as access to various specialty services. We also fully coordinate care for patients with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and other complex medical conditions. We hope the information provided here will answer many of the questions you may have about our practice.

Types of Practice:

We provide comprehensive well child and acute sick medical care to patients from birth through 21 years of age. All our outstanding pediatricians provide care for infants, children, and adolescents. In addition to practicing general pediatrics, Dr. Laura Nicholson also provides specialized evaluation of children with disabilities and behavioral issues at the request of their primary care doctor.

Additionally, although all our pediatricians provide care to adolescents, Jean Braden, Nurse Practitioner, specializes in adolescent care and sees patients 12 years and older.

Finally, our lactation consultant, Lesli Gould, IBCLC, provides mothers with personalized breastfeeding assistance.

Each of our physicians is board-certified in pediatrics and knowledgeable of community resources and regional subspecialists to provide your family with comprehensive, coordinated care.

Group Practice:

The Children's Clinic is designed as a group medical practice. While we encourage you to select a Primary Care Provider (PCP) by your third visit to our office, there may be times when your preferred provider is unavailable. Fortunately, we will then be able to schedule you in with one of our other great providers so that care doesn't have to be postponed. Although we try to be accommodating to patient preference and provider availability, we suggest that patients be willing to see any provider available for acute (sick) and emergent care. Due to our electronic medical record, all of our providers have access to information about your child available to them, regardless of which location you go to or which provider you see. It is your prerogative to wait for an open appointment in your PCP's schedule for follow up and routine appointments. However, please understand that there may not be an opening for a few days or weeks, depending on your appointment request and that provider's schedule. We do pay close attention to our provider's accessibility, however, and work hard to ensure that you can get in to see the provider you choose within a reasonable time frame.

PATIENT HANDBOOK (CONTINUED)

.....

Clinic Hours:

Kids don't stop getting sick at 5pm on Fridays! Knowing this, the Children's Clinic is staffed by a pediatrician 7 days a week. We also have extended hours on weekday evenings to accommodate the acute care needs of our patients.

Our clinic hours are:

Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: 11:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Appointments:

Our patients are seen by appointment only. We prefer scheduling to a "walk in" model so that you don't have to wait hours in a waiting room around other sick kids if a handful of patients walked in at the same time.

We reserve appointment slots each day for scheduling same-day sick visits and we vary the number of reserved appointments by day of week and season of year to make sure we have appropriate availability. Well child, medication recheck appointments, and other non-acute appointments sometimes are scheduled out several weeks, so when you can plan ahead, we encourage you to call in advance to get your appointment on the books.

Additionally, some visits require more time than others. To make sure we set aside enough time to properly care for your child, please provide appropriate information to the receptionist upon scheduling your appointment if your child has a detailed problem (such as ADHD, learning disability, or is in need of a procedure or immunization).

Saturday and Sunday appointments are generally not prescheduled. Most Saturday and Sunday appointments are reserved for acute/urgent care so our established patients can avoid an emergency room visit. These appointments are for urgent needs which cannot be postponed until Monday. Examples of acute/urgent care needs are if your child significantly worsened on Friday or Saturday night or woke up with a high fever, severe diarrhea, or vomiting.

**To schedule an appointment,
please call (406) 281-8700 and select option 2.**

For every appointment, please bring:

- Your insurance or Medicaid card
- A list of current prescription and non-prescription medications, vitamins, and supplements
- A good description of your child's problem (how long have they been sick and how it has been affecting them)
- A list of questions you would like to discuss with a member of your medical team

Please note:

If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for your scheduled appointment, you may be asked to reschedule in order to allow us to provide timely care and minimize the waiting time for all our patients.

PATIENT HANDBOOK (CONTINUED)

New Patients:

It is helpful to have all medical and immunization records sent to us PRIOR to the visit so these can be put into our EMR. Please call the originating office and request to sign a release of records. Our clinic will remind you 48 hours before your appointment to remind you of the date and time that it is scheduled. Please arrive 15 minutes early for your first appointment to allow time to complete the new patient paperwork.

Scheduling Appointments for Multiple Patients:

If you have multiple children and would like to have each child seen one after the other, we can accommodate your needs. Simply schedule them in adjacent slots when you call for your appointments. In general, we do not recommend this for more than two child well checks because it may be hard for little ones to stay in place for that period of time. However, if you live far away from the office or have a special circumstance, we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

Special Accommodations:

The Children's Clinic is accessible by wheelchair at both locations. Handicapped parking is available on the south side of the building at the west end office and on the north side of the building at the downtown location. Interpreters can be provided for your visit, if needed. Please let the receptionist know your needs at the time the appointment is scheduled so arrangements can be made. Let us know if you prefer to receive your care from a Spanish-speaking physician, as we have pediatricians on staff who speak Spanish.

Missed Appointments/No Shows:

We recognize that sometimes conflicts arise that prevent patients from attending scheduled appointments. However, when patients fail to cancel scheduled appointments when conflicts arise, we miss an opportunity to schedule other patients in the appointment slot who may really need medical attention. To provide quality care for as many patients as we can in any given day, we try to strictly adhere to the Children's Clinic's No Show Policy, which states that patients who repeatedly no show are at risk of being dismissed from the practice.

A no show is considered not showing up for a scheduled appointment, arriving more than 15 minutes late for the scheduled appointment, or phoning in to cancel/reschedule the appointment less than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment.

If you are a new patient, you will be dismissed after your second missed new patient appointment. Established patients may be dismissed should the family accrue four no shows within a twelve-month period. You will be notified via a letter to your home address if you have no showed an appointment. Patient dismissal letters will be sent via certified mail. We will continue to see your children for acute care visits for 30 days following dismissal from the practice to allow you time to transition to a different clinic.

Sick and Well Waiting Rooms:

We offer separate sick and well waiting rooms at both of our clinic locations. We ask that you limit the number of guests that accompany you and your child on an office visit. Seating is limited in our waiting areas and your guests might be exposed to illnesses.

PATIENT HANDBOOK (CONTINUED)

.....

If you suspect your child is ill to any degree, please be considerate of all our patients and use the sick waiting room. If you think your child has chicken pox or TB and needs to be seen, please discuss entry into the facility with the front desk receptionist prior to bringing your child into the clinic. If your child is immunocompromised, please notify us and we will room them immediately upon arrival to the clinic.

If you are unsure as to whether you should sit on the sick or well side, the receptionist in your pod will help you decide. They have been trained by our pediatricians as to what constitutes a sick or well visit, so please consider their request as to which waiting room to sit in.

Well Child Visits:

Your newborn's first visit will be scheduled at the downtown office within a few days of birth. Subsequent well visits will occur at 2 weeks, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, and 30 months, and then annually starting at 3 years of age at the location of your choice. These visits involve an assessment of all aspects of your child's health, growth, development, and behavior. Please see our Schedule of Recommended Well Child Visits and Immunizations for information about which immunizations your child will receive at each visit. Routine health maintenance visits, immunizations, and screening tests are scheduled according to the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The AAP recommends using pre-visit screening tools to assist with early identification of health, developmental, and behavioral issues. The Ages & Stages Questionnaire (a developmental screening tool) is to be completed for the 9-month, 18-month, and 2-year visits. We also use the M-CHAT-R (an autism screening tool) at the 18-month and 24-month visits. Patients with ADD/ADHD will be assessed using the Vanderbilt tool. The SCARED form, the CDI, or the PHQ-9 may be used to screen for depression. We also use the GAD-7 to assess anxiety. Please note, however, that practice styles may vary and your pediatrician may alter the screening schedule to meet the needs of your child.

We must charge a small fee when a screening questionnaire is completed due to the time it takes to review and respond to the information provided. You will see this on your bill as procedure 96110. Most insurers pay for this service; however, if the claim is denied by your insurer as a "non-covered" service, you will be responsible for the payment. The American Academy of Pediatrics is working to ensure this service will become fully covered by all insurers and Medicaid. However, if you do receive our bill for screenings after denial of the claim by your insurer, please understand how important this service is to your child's well-being.

Phone Calls:

A phone triage nurse will be available 24/7 to answer any questions you may have about your child's health. You can reach the nurse triage by calling (406) 281-8700 and selecting the phone nurse option from the phone tree.

The phone nurse may be busy giving advice to another caller, so you may have to leave a message for her. However, she will return your call in order of urgency as soon as she can. All calls will be returned on the same day. The phone nurse can help you decide if your child needs to be seen in the office or if there is something you might try at home first.

If your child is ill, please take his/her temperature prior to calling so we can help you determine how ill your child is more quickly. Our phone nurses have been educated and trained by our providers to assist you with medical advice. The reference book used by our phone nurses is Pediatric Telephone Protocols by Barton D. Schmitt, MD, FAAP. If your problem does require that you speak with a provider, your child's PCP or the pediatrician on call will return your call as soon as possible. Providers may not be able to return calls until after 12:00pm or until after 5:00 pm, depending on when they have scheduled patients to see in clinic. All phone calls are documented through our EMR into your child's chart for later reference.

PATIENT HANDBOOK (CONTINUED)

.....

After Hours/Weekends:

If you have a life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately. If your child becomes sick after hours or on a holiday and you need advice, call (406) 281-8700. The answering service will route your after-hours call to pediatric trained registered nurses at Children's Hospital Colorado who will return your call, triage it, and contact our on-call pediatrician, as needed. If you have not received a return call in 30 minutes, please call again.

Insurance:

The Children's Clinic accepts many insurance plans. Please check with your insurance directly to determine if the Children's Clinic providers are listed as participating (in-network) providers with your particular insurance plan.

We know insurance can be complicated and we always try to assist patients in navigating insurance issues whenever we can. However, employers choose the insurance coverage their employees receive and we will not know the specifics of your insurance plan. It is your responsibility to assure that your insurance is active and to know the benefits it covers when you come to see us. Be sure to sign up any new family members (babies, etc.) with your insurance carrier immediately to obtain coverage. Insurance companies will deny all claims until new family members are added to your plan. Most insurance companies do not allow us to resubmit the claim after it is denied, requiring you to call your insurance company to ask them to reprocess the claim once your new family member is added to your insurance. It is best that you simply add your new family member ASAP to avoid denied claims.

Billing Policies:

Copayments, coinsurances, deductibles, and any charges for non-insurance covered services are due at check-in. You may pay with a major credit card, personal check, or cash.

Please call if you have a question about your bill. Most problems can be settled quickly and easily; your call will prevent any misunderstandings. Let us know if your family is under significant financial hardship. Special arrangements can be made for extended payment plans if necessary. If a reduced payment arrangement is made with the clinic, future copayments must still be made at the time of service. By law, they may not be included in a payment plan. We want to be sure that your family receives the care you need and deserve and satisfactory arrangements can almost always be made. Financial considerations should never prevent children from receiving the urgent care they need at the time they need it. Our patient accounts representative is here Monday - Friday. You can contact the billing office by calling (406) 281- 8700 and following the phone tree to be routed to the proper billing team specialist.

We must have updated confirmation of your insurance at every visit. It is your responsibility to let us know of any changes in insurance data, addresses, telephone numbers, etc. If no proof of insurance is provided, you will be responsible for the cost of the visit. As a courtesy, our billing office will handle submission of your claim for your appointment directly to your insurance company and will bill you for any remaining balance after the insurance has paid its share. Any charges remaining unpaid 45 days after the date of service are considered past due. In this case, we will make every effort to contact the person responsible for the delinquent balance and arrange an equitable payment schedule. However, if no effort is made to pay the balance due, it may be sent to a collection agency. In this situation the account will be put on a cash only basis and you will be required to pay cash at each subsequent visit.

PATIENT HANDBOOK (CONTINUED)

.....

Laboratory and Diagnostic Tests:

We draw blood at both locations of our office and send the samples to St. Vincent Healthcare for analysis. If your insurance requires you to or if you prefer to use another laboratory, we can send the orders with you to have your blood drawn there.

Most other routine diagnostic and radiology tests are done at St. Vincent Healthcare, located at 1233 N 30th Street. Your provider or nurse will call you to discuss the results of the testing and any needed follow up.

All positive lab results will be reported to you once we receive the information from the lab. Please remember that it usually takes 48-72 hours to return results. There are some tests, however, that are sent to the state lab and take longer to be returned, such as the newborn screening test and certain viral panels.

Circumcisions:

Circumcisions are routinely done in the hospital prior to discharge. All infants require a dose of Vitamin K before the procedure can be completed. If the procedure is done in the clinic, the Children's Clinic will bill your insurance for the procedure. If your child is covered by Medicaid or any other insurance that does not cover circumcisions, payment is required before the procedure.

Due to the cost of equipment, the charge for in-clinic circumcisions is greater than the charge for the procedure being done in the hospital.

The policy of the Children's Clinic is that this procedure must be completed before the baby is 3 weeks old, although some of our pediatricians decline to complete circumcisions even before that point.

Referrals:

Most managed care insurance plans require referrals if you are seeking care from anyone other than your primary care provider. We have a list of specialists that we recommend on a regular basis that have been compiled based on positive experience with their services. If your PCP recommends you see a specialist, we will send a written referral along with a referral letter or office notes to that provider. Please allow 3 - 5 days for this to be completed before calling the specialist to make the appointment. Please contact the specialist's office 2 business days before your visit to verify that the referral process has been completed and they have received the necessary records. This will ensure no complications occur on the day of your visit.

Forms:

School physicals, daycare, camp, and similar forms take time to review and to provide all requested information. We will complete these forms as soon as possible but it may take up to one week. They can be mailed to you or picked up at either office location. If your child has not had a physical or well child check within the last 12 months, an appointment for a well visit will be required.

PATIENT HANDBOOK (CONTINUED)

.....

Vaccines:

The Children's Clinic believes children and young adults should receive all vaccines on the schedule recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Vaccinating your children may be the single most important health-promoting intervention we perform as healthcare providers and that you can perform as parents/caregivers. If your child has not been seen in the past two years for a well child appointment, we will not provide vaccines at a nurse-only visit until a well-child visit has taken place to allow the provider to counsel you on the recommended vaccinations appropriate for your child's age.

Parents who choose not to vaccinate their children will be required to sign a Decision Not to Vaccinate form confirming that we have counseled you on the benefits of vaccines and you are choosing not to vaccinate. Parents who refuse to sign the Decision Not to Vaccinate form after choosing not to vaccinate may be dismissed from the practice. It is your responsibility to inform the provider at each encounter, including telephone calls, that your child is not immunized to ensure they receive the appropriate care. Please recognize that by not vaccinating, you are putting your child at unnecessary risk for life threatening illnesses, disability, and even death.

We are happy to provide you with a record of your child's vaccinations, if needed. All vaccines, both historical and current, will be entered into our EMR. Our clinic policy is that ImMTrax is considered the official record. ImMTrax is a state-wide computerized system that collects data from all vaccine providers and consolidates them into a single report. Although we may be able to complete it sooner, please allow 24 hours for this report to be generated.

Prescription Refills:

The Children's Clinic requires you to contact your pharmacy directly to submit prescription refill requests for all prescriptions except for refill requests for ADD/ADHD medications. We then receive an electronic request from your pharmacy that will be processed within 48 hours.

If you are requesting a refill of an ADD or ADHD medication, please contact the Children's Clinic directly. You can reach our prescription refill line by calling 406-281-8700 and following the phone tree. When leaving a message, please share your name, your child's name and birthdate, the name and dosage of the ADD or ADHD medication you want refilled, and the best number to reach you at to let you know that your prescription is ready for you to pick up. We refill ADD and ADHD prescriptions off of this line between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday, and refill requests will be processed within 48 hours.

Certain chronic conditions may require an office visit prior to the medication being refilled in order to monitor effectiveness and/or side effects of the medication. Similarly, refills for some medications can only be given to patients who have been seen within the last year. If your child has not been seen for a while, you may need to schedule an appointment before the refill can be completed. Antibiotics will not be prescribed over the telephone without a clinic visit. If your child is being seen for ADD/ADHD, most of our providers require an office visit at least every six months to monitor the medications effectiveness and side effects. Some medicines used for ADD/ADHD are controlled substances and the procedures for dispensing them are strictly regulated by the FDA.

Medical Records:

A medical records release form must be completed before records can be released from our office. You may stop by either location to complete the form or we can mail it to you. Our clinic policy is that we are only able to release records that have originated from the Children's Clinic. We will not release copies of anything sent to us from another physician or practice. There is typically not a fee for medical records, but in some legal circumstances, we may charge a fee. To contact our medical records representative, please call 406-281-8700, follow the phone tree, and leave a message.

PATIENT HANDBOOK (CONTINUED)

MyChart:

MyChart offers you personalized and secure online access to portions of your electronic medical record (EMR) at no charge. It enables you to securely use the Internet to help manage and receive information about your health. At your office visit, you will be given a welcome letter which will contain an activation code. All you need is a computer connected to the Internet and an up-to-date browser and you'll be on your way!

With MyChart you can:

- Review your medications, immunizations, allergies, problem list and history
- View details of past and upcoming appointments
- Receive some lab results online
- Communicate electronically and securely with your care team
- Review health education topics provided by your doctor or nurse practitioner

MyChart may be used for routine communication with your physician's office, but is not intended to replace office visits with your provider. Providers may not be able to answer all your questions electronically. They may request that you schedule an appointment to make an accurate diagnosis and determine the best treatment plan for your condition.

HIPAA:

At the Children's Clinic, we strive to keep your information private according to the guidelines of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). This notice describes how medical information about your minor child may be used and disclosed and how you can obtain access to this information. The Notice of Privacy Practices detailing our HIPAA compliance can be found at any time by visiting our website. However, upon your request, we will provide you with a printed copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices. Simply ask a receptionist while you're at the clinic or call the office and request a copy be sent to you in the mail. We understand the importance of your privacy and every effort will be made upon check-in to maintain that privacy. Please assist the receptionists in verifying your information by staying at their desks answering their questions until the check-in is completed.

Students and Residents:

Our practice is associated with the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho medical school program (WWAMI). Our physicians also teach family practice residents from the Montana Family Practice Residency Program, the Rocky Mountain College Physician Assistant (PA) Program, and some nurse practitioner programs. Medical students, family practice residents, PA students, nurse practitioner students, RN, and LPN students train and work with us in the office and may participate in your child's care. With your permission, these professionals will be involved in your child's visit in various ways. Please know, however, that our pediatricians or nurse practitioner will completely review their work, examine your child, and decide on the best treatment plan. We appreciate your cooperation with these programs.

If you do not wish to have a student involved in your child's care, please tell us immediately.



West End

3401 Avenue E, Billings, MT 59102



Downtown

1232 N. 30th Street, Suite 100, Billings, MT 59101



(406) 281-8700

childrensclinicofbillings.com