

Late and Urgent Visit Policy

Ear, Nose and Throat Consultants, Inc. values the goodwill of all our patients, caregivers, and families. We appreciate the busy pace of your lives and respect the fact that your time is precious. With your cooperation, we can improve our ability to make your visits with us more efficient, enjoyable, and stress-free.

When a patient arrives late for a visit, we do everything in our power to see that patient without significantly inconveniencing other patients. If a patient arrives late and there are no other patients scheduled or ready to be seen, we will see the late patient when he or she arrives. However, if a patient arrives more than 5 minutes late and other patients are waiting, we assess how accommodating that patient will affect other patients. Patients who arrive on time are prioritized over those who arrive late. We also take into account the reason for the appointment. Sick patients always take priority over routine appointments.

We often cannot predict how long a late arrival may wait. Sometimes late arrivals can be accommodated if another patient fails to show up for an appointment. We may suggest returning at a later time to minimize your waiting time in the office, but we cannot guarantee a later appointment time. Emergencies often interrupt our plans. We also might suggest you see another provider who is available. On very busy days, as a last resort, we may have to ask a late patient to reschedule their appointment to another day. Calling to notify us that you are running late helps us accommodate a late arrival better, but does not alter the late arrival policy.

All of us at ENT Consultants wish that every patient could be seen promptly at his or her scheduled appointment time. We dislike keeping our patients and families waiting, just as we dislike being kept waiting ourselves. We believe that everyone's time is valuable, and we are constantly revising our schedule to improve patient flow and to be as accommodating as possible to all.

Why do I have to arrive on time if the provider doesn't always run on time?

We ask patients to arrive on time, and enforce our late policy, as late arrivals affect the entire schedule. For example, if our first patient of the day arrives 15 minutes late, it is impossible to get back on schedule for the remainder of the clinical session. We certainly cannot make up that time by short-changing subsequent patients.

Emergencies also affect schedules. We are medical providers and surgeons, and some emergencies require us to perform procedures, or even to leave the office urgently for a hospital. A patient who is seriously ill, bleeding, or complicated requires a much longer visit, and can absorb more office resources, including the physician's assistant, surgical scheduler, nurses, medical assistants, and front-desk staff. This almost always causes a provider to run behind. Whenever possible, we will call ahead to notify patients if a provider is running more than an hour behind schedule.

It is our policy to accommodate, on a same-day basis, all patients who require an emergency visit. We never know exactly how many patients are going to need to be seen. On any given day, anywhere from 3 to 30 patients may call each physician requiring a same-day visit. We have created a dynamic schedule that allows for most variations. However, when there are more than expected, it becomes increasingly challenging to keep all of the clinicians' schedules running punctually.

When there are no emergency spots available, we will advise that those with urgent, but not emergent, care issues of a scheduled time when s/he can come in to be seen after hours, early the next day, or we may suggest coming in and waiting until there is a break in the schedule. We cannot predict when such a break will occur. We may alternatively suggest going to your PCP, a

walk-in clinic, or the ER, depending on the nature of the emergency.

How can you help?

You can help us greatly improve our ability to see you on time by arriving on time yourself for a scheduled visit. Please call us if you think that you will arrive more than 10 minutes late. If possible, we will try to adjust our schedule. However, it is possible that we will ask you to reschedule your visit to another day. We would also appreciate a call ahead of time if you hope to have an additional child or family member seen for a visit. Your call will help us to adjust for the "squeeze-in" appropriately.

In order to improve office flow, we typically suggest both an "arrival time" for you as well as an "appointment time." By coming a few minutes earlier than your appointment, at your suggested "arrival time," you enable our office staff to update your medical and demographic information, collect any necessary copay, check insurance and referral data, assess vital signs, and prepare an exam room with any equipment necessary for your visit. This enables everyone to be seen more promptly and efficiently.