

TO OUR PATIENTS

WELCOME TO OUR PRACTICE! The following are a few guidelines that will allow us to assist you in the most expeditious manner.

Office hours are from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and from 8 a.m. until 12 noon on Fridays. Patients arriving after 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, will not be seen. This includes patients scheduled for labs, x-rays, bone densities, infusions, and therapeutic injections with methotrexate or gold.

Patients arriving after their scheduled appointment may have to reschedule.

1. **New Patients:** At your first visit the physician assistant will usually take your medical history before you see the physician. Please expect your new patient appointment to take 1 ½ to 2 hours from the time of your scheduled appointment until checkout. Please bring this completed registration form with you to your office visit, as well as your insurance card(s) and your medications. This will reduce the amount of time you will have to wait before being seen, as you will not be seen by a physician until your paperwork has been completed. If you will need assistance completing these forms, please arrive in the office at least 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Please be prepared to pay your copayment at the time of your office visit and to pay your deductible amount if required. If you have evidence that you have met your deductible, please bring that with you to the office.
The physicians at Carolina Arthritis Associates do not see patients without insurance (self-pay).

When a patient fails to show for a scheduled appointment they prevent another patient from being seen in that time slot. This wastes the time of the physician and the staff. Therefore, if a new patient fails to show for a scheduled appointment, without calling to cancel or reschedule 24-hours prior to the scheduled appointment, they may be required to pay \$100 up front before they will be allowed to schedule another appointment.

2. **All Patients:**
 - Pre-authorization for Office Visits - If your insurance company requires pre-authorization for office visits, you must obtain this prior to your scheduled appointment. It is up to the patient and/or their referring physician's office to obtain insurance pre-authorizations for office visits. **If you do not have this pre-authorization for the office visit at the time of your scheduled appointment you will not be seen by a physician until the pre-authorization is received.**
 - All patients are expected to pay their co-pay amounts at the time of the office visit.
 - Please make sure that you sign in when you arrive at the office. All patients must sign in, including patients scheduled for therapeutic injections with methotrexate or gold, labs, x-rays, infusions, and bone densities. If you do not sign in you stand the risk of being overlooked, thereby, increasing your waiting time.
 - If you miss two scheduled appointments, without a 24-hour notice to our office, you will be given a warning that a third no show may result in Carolina Arthritis Associates asking that you seek care for rheumatology related problems elsewhere.

TO OUR PATIENTS (Continued)

- **Family Members/Companions Accompanying Patients** – Due to space limitations and to assure the privacy of our patients, **only 1 family member/guest** may accompany patients into the clinical areas. **No family member or companion is allowed in the infusion area unless the patient has special needs.** This is necessary not only to assure the privacy of our patients, but also to provide the nursing staff with ample room in the event of an emergent situation.
 - **Cell Phones** – To avoid their interference with equipment and as a courtesy to other patients, cell phones are not allowed in the clinical areas.
3. **Laboratory:** Lab tests are sent to Lab Corp. Please check with your insurance carrier to determine if Lab Corp is an approved laboratory. All lab visits are by appointment only.
 4. **Office Visits:** The physicians at **Carolina Arthritis Associates see patients by appointment only.** In order for our physicians to serve a population of over 500,000, appointment scheduling is necessary. For this reason, **walk-ins cannot be seen.** If you are having a problem, please call the office and an appointment will be scheduled for you as soon as possible. If your problem is of an emergent nature, please proceed to the nearest emergency department. If your problem is not of an emergent nature but you feel that you cannot wait for an appointment, contact your primary care physician or go to one of the urgent care centers.
 5. **Telephone Calls:** Please be advised that if you do not receive a call regarding labs, bone densities, or x-rays, there are no abnormalities and the reports will be discussed with you at your next office visit. When calling the office, please use the following procedure.
 - **Nurse Calls, Prescription Refills and Medical Questions** – When the voice mail answers, please press 7 if you wish to leave a message for your doctor’s nurse.
 - **Appointments** – If you wish to schedule or change an appointment, please press 2.
 - **Laboratory** – If you would like to schedule or change a laboratory appointment, please press 9.
 - **Insurance & Billing** – If you have questions regarding billing or insurance, please press 8.
 - **Practice Manager** – If you would like to speak with the practice manager, please press 1010.
 - **Infusion** – If you would like to speak with an infusion nurse, please press 5.
 - **Study Coordinator** – If you would like to speak with the study coordinator, please press 6.

We hope that your experience with Carolina Arthritis Associates will be a pleasant one.

We strive to see patients on time to the extent possible. However, there may be times when your doctor must unexpectedly care for a very sick patient, or a patient with extensive medical problems, and falls behind schedule. Our nursing staff will make every effort possible to let patients know if the doctor is behind schedule. Your patience is appreciated. Thank you for your cooperation.

John L. Harshbarger, M.D.

Gregory F. Schimizzi, M.D.

David W. Puett, M.D.

David H. Snow, M.D.

Louie E. Tsiktsiris, M.D.

Mark D. Harris, M.D.

Wendy W. Simmons, PA-C