

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Dear Patient:

It is our desire to inform you that we are taking the new Federal (HIPAA-Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) laws written to protect the confidentiality of your health information seriously. We do not want to delay treatment because you are afraid your personal health history might be unnecessarily made available to others outside of our office.

HOW YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE USED

To Provide Treatment

We will use your Health Information within our office to provide you with the best orthodontic care possible. This may include administrative and clinical office procedures designed to optimize scheduling and coordination of care between orthodontic assistants, orthodontist, and business office staff. In addition, we may share your health information with physicians, referring dentists, clinical and dental laboratories, and other health care personnel providing you treatment.

To Obtain Payment

We may include your health information with an invoice used to collect payment for treatment you receive in our office. We may do this with insurance forms filed for you in the mail or sent electronically. We will make every attempt to only work with companies with a similar commitment to the security of your health information.

To Conduct Health Care Operations

Your health information may be used during performance evaluations of our staff. As a result, health information may be included in training programs for students, interns, associates, and business and clinical employees. It is also possible that health information will be disclosed during audits by insurance companies or government appointed agencies as part of their quality assurance and compliance reviews. Your health information may be reviewed during the routine processes of certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

In Patient Reminders

Because we believe regular visits are very important to your over all treatment, we will remind you that it is time to make an appointment.

Additionally, we may contact you to follow up on your care and inform you of treatment options or services that may be of interest to you or your family. They may include postcards, letters, telephone calls.

Abuse or Neglect

We will notify government authorities if we believe a patient is the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. We will make this disclosure only when we are compelled by our ethical judgment, when we believe we are specifically required or authorized by law or with the patient's agreement.

Public Health and National Security

We may be required to disclose to Federal officials or military authorities health information necessary to complete an investigation related to public health or national security. Health information could be important when the government believes that the public safety could benefit when the information could lead to the control or prevention of an epidemic or the understanding of new side effects of a drug treatment or medical device.

For Law Enforcement

As permitted or required by State or Federal law, we may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for certain limited circumstances, if you are a victim of a crime or in order to report a crime.

Family, Friends and Caregivers

We may share your health information with those you tell us will be helping you with your home hygiene, treatment, medications, or payment. In case of an emergency, where you are unable to tell us what you want we will use our best judgment when sharing your health information only when it will be important to those participating in providing your care.

Authorization to Use or Disclose Health Information

Other than is stated above or where Federal, State or Local Law requires us, we will not disclose your health information other than with your written permission. You may revoke that authorization in writing at any time.

PATIENT RIGHTS

This new law is careful to describe that you have the following rights related to your health information.

Restrictions

You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. Our office will make every effort to honor reasonable requests from our patients.

Confidential Communications

You have the right to request that we communicate with you in a certain way. You may request that we only communicate your health information privately with no other family members present or through mailed communication that is sealed. We will make every effort to honor your reasonable request for confidential communications.

Inspect and Copy Your Health Information

You have the right to read, review, and copy your health information, including your complete chart, x-rays, and billing records. If you would like a copy of your health information, please let us know. We may charge you a reasonable fee to duplicate and assemble your copy.

Amend Your Health Information

You have the right to ask us to update or modify your records if you believe your health information records are incorrect or incomplete. We will be happy to accommodate you as long as our office maintains this information. In order to standardize our process, please provide us with your request in writing and describe your reason for the change.

Your request may be denied if the health information record in question was not created by our office, is not part of our records or if the records containing your health information are determined to be accurate and complete.

Documentation of Health Information

You have the right to ask us for a description of how and where your health information was used by our office for any reason other than for treatment, payment, or health operations. Our documentation procedures will enable us to provide information on health information usage from April 14, 2003 forward. Please let us know in writing the time period for which you are interested. Thank You for limiting your request to no more than 2 years at a time. We may charge you a reasonable fee for your request.

Request a Paper Copy of this Notice

You have the right to obtain a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices directly from our office at any time. Stop by our office to pick one up, visit our website: www.gardnergrins.com or call and we will mail a copy to you.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide to you and your representative this Notice of our Privacy Practices. We are required to practice the policies and procedures described in this notice but we do reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice. If we change our privacy practices we will be sure all of our patients receive a copy of the revised Notice.

You have the right to express complaints to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been compromised. We encourage you to express any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your information. Please let us know of your concerns or complaints in writing.

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