

Welcome to Tohickon Internal Medicine, LLC

Comprehensive primary care for adult and maturing adolescent patients

(16 years and up)

At Tohickon Internal Medicine we believe your primary care physician can be more than just a healthcare provider to see when you are sick. We believe that building and maintaining a relationship based on trust, honest communication, and mutual respect is vital to the long-term value of having a primary care provider as an adult.

The following policies will help you understand our guidelines and philosophy in providing health care to our patients. Please review them to determine if we are a good fit for you and your family:

- **Collaborative approach to care:** One of the primary pillars of our approach to patient care is team work. Our physicians, nurse practitioners, front office staff, and nurses actively collaborate with each other every day to give you the best care possible. From your call to establish care we help you choose a provider based on the kind of care you are seeking. He or she will get to know you during your New Patient appointment and will follow you as your primary care provider learning the nuances of your medical history, your reaction to medications, your personality, your lifestyle, and your treatment preferences.
- **What is a nurse practitioner?** Nurse practitioners (NPs) are experienced nurses with specific training, advanced degrees, and board certification that allow them to diagnose diseases, prescribe medications, order tests, and create treatment programs. Their education and scope provides a similar breadth of knowledge of conditions typically managed by a primary care physician, but does not provide the same depth of expertise with rarer, more complex diseases. For this reason, in the state of Pennsylvania, nurse practitioners must collaborate with physicians when oversight is necessary. Our regular office schedule includes a physician on-site every day for consultation and oversight when needed.

If you regularly see a physician as your primary and are in stable condition, you may be asked to follow up with a nurse practitioner. This frees up our physician schedules to see you quicker when you are more critically ill. Similarly, a nurse practitioner may ask you to see a physician to follow up on a more complex issue to ensure that you are getting the best care possible.

- **Annual wellness visits, health screenings, and vaccines:** We want to see our patients in wellness as well as in times of illness. Your annual physical appointment is an important visit that used to recommend screenings and vaccines, ensure your medications are still appropriate, review your chronic conditions, if any, and answer any questions you have. **In order to be able to help you make informed decisions when an unexpected health issue arises, a wellness visit once a year is essential and the minimum participation we expect from our patients.** We encourage and expect our patients to receive all medically recognized, age appropriate, health screenings and vaccinations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). The following links will review the recognized screenings recommended for you by gender and age:
<https://healthfinder.gov/>
<https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Name/recommendations>
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-combined-schedule.pdf>
- **Sick visits, antibiotics and controlled medications:** In order to treat you effectively and safely when you become ill we must see you for a visit. We will review the details of all your symptoms and examine you physically before prescribing a medication using evidence-based guidelines. We work hard not to contribute to the serious problem of antibiotic resistance for both our patients and the community; **therefore we do not routinely call in antibiotics from a phone call request.** When the need to prescribe controlled medications occurs we observe strict protocols including random drug testing.
- **Chronic Care visits:** Patients with health conditions needing extra monitoring and care, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, will be asked to schedule follow-up visits during the year at regular intervals mutually decided on by

you and your provider. As an internal medicine practice helping adult patients achieve their health goals, no matter the challenge, is our specialty.

- **Emergency room utilization:** As your primary medical home we strongly encourage you to **always call us first before seeking care elsewhere**. We are available when you need us. We are well equipped with 24 hour access to your electronic medical record and ready to address your needs through one of the following:
 1. **Same-day sick appointments.** Every day our office reserves a portion of our office visits at various times throughout the day and evening for same-day sick scheduling. Call us as soon as we open at 8:00 A.M., Monday through Saturday, and we will schedule an appointment, for that same day.
 2. **After hours contact with one of our providers.** When the office is closed one of our providers is always available for on-call phone consultation with patients experiencing urgent medical problems. Unless it is a true medical emergency (in which case you should call 911), patients in need of urgent help can call our office phone, press 7 and be routed to our answering service. The service will immediately message the on-call provider with your contact information. The provider will then return your call within moments. We have 24/7 access to your electronic medical record to be able to give you personalized medical advice when you need it most. **Please note: Non-urgent requests such as medication refills are inappropriate uses of on-call services.** These requests can be made after-hours by leaving a voice message on the office phone or through your patient portal.
 3. **Direct phone line to a nurse during office hours.** Each day we have a dedicated nurse manning our nurse line to address your health questions. The nurse is there to help you pick the most appropriate over-the-counter medication, answer your follow-up questions after recent visits, and most importantly, to be able to recognize a true medical emergency that may prompt an office or ER visit.
 4. **Online patient portal.** Confidential, non-emergency messaging to your provider is available through your personal online portal account. In addition to messaging your provider, you can review and download your health records, view test results, check your future appointments, and request medication refills all at your own convenience.
- **Specialist referrals:** We want to be involved in providing care in our office or referring you to the most appropriate specialist when necessary. As your primary we request you to contact our office to discuss care plans when considering scheduling an appointment with a specialist. Whenever you do see a specialist, we ask that you request a report be sent directly to our office so we can stay informed of your care outside our practice.
- **Safe space:** All our providers are well trained to discuss topics such as sexual health, mental health, financial insecurity, trauma, abuse, sexual orientation, gender identity, and racial discrimination. We know these factors can influence your overall wellness. Your doctor's office is a safe space where the privacy of your personal information is received respectfully and protected by law. You, in your entirety, are welcome here.
- **We accept a wide variety of insurance plans:** We strongly encourage our patients to fully inform themselves on the full costs of their health care and the details of their insurance coverage. Although we do our best to stay abreast of the insurance changes year to year, we cannot accurately advise patients on the details of their individual insurance plans. We always advise patients to call the customer service number listed on their insurance card for details of their coverage. We also offer cash payment options to patients without insurance. Please contact the office manager for rates.

Our general office and billing policies are important to review when deciding if we are the right practice for you. We expect patients to agree to these terms. Office policies can be reviewed by clicking on this [link](#).