

## OFFICE POLICIES

**Follow-up appointments:** Patients are encouraged and expected to keep follow-up appointments. Consistent skin care will result in better control of your skin condition (and aids in early detection of skin cancer.) Dr. Fitch will determine the appropriate time for your follow-up visit. It is best to schedule your follow-up visit at check-out to ensure that an appointment can be obtained. The clinic usually books several weeks in advance. Patient education, prevention and early treatment of skin cancers are the important goal of this dermatology clinic and require regular follow-ups.

**Cancellation list:** If an immediate appointment is not available, please take the first one available and then request to be placed on our cancellation list. An appointment may become available within 72 hours.

**Missed appointments:** The Clinic discourages missed appointments and being late for an appointment. If you realize you will be more than 15 minutes late, please call and reschedule your appointment. Emergencies and conflicts do occur and we understand this. However, we ask that the patient give the Clinic 24 hours advanced notification if an appointment cannot be kept. Some emergencies do not allow such advance but a phone call would be appreciated. If a patient misses one appointment without notice, there will be a \$25 charge. If a second appointment and or subsequent appointments are missed, there will be a \$50 charge for each. At the discretion of the Office Manager after a third appointment is missed the patient may be asked to seek their dermatologic care elsewhere.

Appointments which require an extended amount of time (ex: surgery, melanoma, extensive warts) and are missed will accrue a No-Show charge commensurate with the amount of time reserved for that appointment.

**Phone policy:** Patients are encouraged to call the office for any problems; however, medical questions are best addressed by consultation with Dr. Fitch at the time of your appointment. For Dr. Fitch to leave a patient being treated to answer phone calls would obviously be unfair to the patient being treated. The office staff has been trained to answer most questions. If they are unable to help you immediately, arrangements will be made to return your call. The medical assistants return phone calls twice per day...at lunch break and at the end of the day. Please feel confident in leaving a message with the staff. All messages are recorded in duplicate form. Usually charts must be retrieved and reviewed and discussed with Dr. Fitch prior to the call being returned. This is efficient and results in better patient care. Should you have an emergency, please notify the receptionist.

**New patients:** A new patient is considered on who has never been seen before AND one who has not been seen in the past three (3) years. These patients must present to the Clinic 20 minutes prior to their appointment time to fill out or update their information. However, if the forms are downloaded from this website and completed, the patient need only arrive 5 minutes prior to their appointment time. A valid insurance card and proof of identity (e.g. driver's license) are required for all new patients. This is necessary for insurance filing. If these documents are missing, full payment from the patient will be requested.

**Referred patients:** If another physician has referred you. Dr. Fitch must have the referral in writing. It is the patient's responsibility to make sure this has been done through communication with the referring physician. Dr. Fitch will notify the referring physician of her findings.

**Evening and week-end call:** Dr. Fitch does not have an answering service and she will frequently be out of town. During after-hours, the message on our office machine will direct you how to reach Dr. Fitch. Please use these numbers for only true emergencies.

**Cell phone policy:** We do not allow "on" cell phones in the building. They must be turned OFF when entering the Clinic. If you feel you have an emergency reason for keeping it turned on, please notify the receptionist of the reason.

**Food/Eating policy:** You must not bring food or drink into the building. We reserve the right to take such items. The Clinic is not a restaurant.

**People accompanying the patient:** We are unable to consult or treat anyone who does not have a medical appointment in their name. Medico legally, we must have a chart if a medical opinion is rendered. If the person is currently a patient, it would be improper to render consultation time to someone without an appointment.

**Copying of Medical Records:** If the patient decides to transfer their skin care to another physician, there will be a charge for copying said records. The fees are in strict accordance with section 44-115-80 of the South Carolina Code. A physician, or other owner of medical records for in Section 44-115-130, may charge a fee for the search and duplication of a medical record, but the fee may not exceed sixty-five cents per page for the first thirty pages and fifty cents per page for all other pages, and a clerical fee for handling not to exceed fifteen dollars per request. There will be no charges for our referring the patient elsewhere or if the patient is relocating out of the Aiken Area. Medical records are the property of Aiken Dermatology and Skin Cancer Clinic, PA.

**I HAVE READ THESE OFFICE POLICIES AND UNDERSTAND THESE POLICIES.**

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**Signature**

**Date**

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**Printed Name**