

Pediatric Associates of Franklin

Williamson County's Premier Pediatric Practice

Please visit our website at

www.pediatricsoffranklin.com for

information about our clinical team including our physicians and nurse practitioner. Also, find educational resources for families, online services such as well child appointment requests, patient registration, health history forms, prescription refills, and online bill payment. We look forward to providing quality healthcare to your family.

Thank you for choosing Pediatric Associates of Franklin as your child's healthcare provider.

Thomas (Tim) J. Carr, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Managing Partner

Medical Doctor, Board Certified Pediatrician

John W. Chambers, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Medical Doctor, Board Certified Pediatrician

Phyllis Townsend, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Medical Doctor, Board Certified Pediatrician

Allison Couden, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Medical Doctor, Board Certified Pediatrician

Molly Hood, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Medical Doctor, Board Certified Pediatrician

Allen Peabody, MD., F.A.A.P.

Medical Doctor, Board Certified Pediatrician

Donna Hamacher, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Medical Doctor, Board Certified Pediatrician

Danielle Nicholls, MSN, CPNP-PC, RN

Board Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

Katherine Harrison, C-PNP

Board Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

Carol Hawkins, FACMPE, Administrator

Mission Statement

Pediatric Associates of Franklin strives to form a partnership with our parents, families, and community through quality, comprehensive pediatric care.

Our goal is to provide education, guidance, and support for our families in a professional, empathetic environment.

Welcome to Pediatric Associates of Franklin

Thank you for choosing our practice for your child's healthcare needs. We appreciate the opportunity you are giving us to participate in the care of your child. We look forward to a mutually rewarding relationship with the families we serve. This handbook has been designed to inform you about our practice. Please take a few moments to review our handbook. We are happy to answer or clarify any additional questions you may have.

Our practice is focused on assisting parents in the health and wellness of their children. We are available for consultation, prevention, and treatment of the physical and emotional health concerns of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. All of our doctors are pediatricians, which means that each has spent at least three years in pediatric specialty training (residency) after medical school. Pediatricians specialize in the care of patients from birth through young adulthood. The "F.A.A.P." after each doctor's name means that he or she is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and has also passed specialty-certifying examination by the American Board of Pediatrics (i.e., Board Certified). Our board certified doctors see newborn babies delivered at Williamson Medical Center, Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, and Saint Thomas Midtown (formerly Baptist Hospital). Children with illnesses requiring hospitalization are admitted to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville or at the Williamson Medical Center location, and the Children's Hospital at TriStar Centennial. Our doctors are on the clinical faculty at Vanderbilt University Medical School and participate in the training of pediatric residents.

Most families pick one doctor as their primary pediatrician. It is a good idea for children to see the same doctor for check-ups and for sick visits whenever possible. However, if your child needs to be seen when the doctor you usually see is out of the office or otherwise unavailable, one of the other doctors will be happy to see your child. Our doctors are generally off one day a week. At night and on weekends, our doctors rotate office schedules, so most families eventually meet all of our doctors.

ANNUAL HEALTH MAINTENANCE VISIT

We are happy to be able to provide annual health maintenance visits, also known as well-child visits, physicals, or checkups to our patients. We consider this an important part of caring for your child.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND YOUR RIGHT TO PRIVACY

We take your child's legal right to privacy very seriously. Discussions regarding your child's health, medical history, and financial records will only occur with legal guardians. In compliance with Tennessee law and HIPAA Privacy Requirements we will not release information to any other person who asks for documentation without your consent. Specific questions will be asked to confirm your status and identity when you call to discuss a bill, pick up records, ask a nurse a question, or pick up a prescription from our office. Legal authorization will be required to release information to other parties. Divorce decrees will be required if specific requests are made by either parent or in the case of parental disagreement. **Our complete privacy policy is available in our office or on our website for your review. Printed copies are provided at your first visit and are always available upon request at any other time.**

MEDICAL RECORDS REQUEST

Medical Records Release forms are available in our office or on line at www.pediatricsoffranklin.com. Upon receipt of a signed release we will copy your records and transfer according to the following policies:

- One copy, free of charge, to one physician located in the State of Tennessee;
- Immunization Record, if the medical record is still in our office, is provided free to a physician's office or parent;
- One copy, free of charge, Medical Record Summary (5 pages), mailed to Out-of- State physician's office;
- A complete copy of your child's Medical Record can be mailed to an Out-of-State physicians' office and will be charged according to Tennessee Medical Records Law;
- Patient Medical Records for parent's personal use, attorney request, and insurance company request will be charged according to Tennessee Medical Records Law;
- Medical Records obtained from our off-site storage facility will be charged an additional **\$30.00 retrieval fee.**
- **Payment is required in advance of Medical Records being copied and processed. All Medical Records are the property of Pediatric Associates of Franklin. Medical Records are sent to off- site storage after being transferred or if not seen in our office within the past four years.**

OFFICE HOURS

Please call for an appointment for all visits. Our appointment hours are Monday – Friday: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM. Extended hours on evenings and weekends are available by appointment for acute care. Extended office hours can be found on our website at www.pediatricsoffranklin.com or by calling 615-790-3200.

Our phones are answered in the office beginning at 7:45 a.m., Monday through Friday. After the office is closed our phone lines are answered by our answering service.

Except for emergencies, patients are seen only with appointments. Of course, we see emergencies, but it still helps if you call first in case we need to give first-aid instructions before you come in. Please note that regular office hours for all types of visits (including well-child and re-checks) are Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 5:00 PM. Please try to arrive shortly before your appointment time in order to update any paperwork and verify insurance coverage. **Registration forms need to be updated annually and be found on our website.** If you have more than one child who needs to be seen, please schedule an appointment time for each child.

We have a limited staff in the office during evenings and on weekends. **There is an extra charge for Extended Hour office visits. If your insurance plan does not cover the after hour charge, it will be billed to you directly.** Our office is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Easter, Labor Day, Memorial Day, and Fourth of July, but has 24-hour answering services available for emergencies.

CANCELLATION OF APPOINTMENTS

We request that you contact our office at least **24 hours** in advance of a scheduled appointment if you need to cancel or re-schedule an appointment. You will receive an automated phone reminder, text message, or e-mail of your appointment two days prior, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to maintain appointment schedules. Notifying our office allows us to provide services to another family and meet the needs of all our patients. Not showing up for an appointment will result in a **\$30 service charge**, which is due upon receipt of the invoice.

SELF-PAY PATIENTS, NON-CONTRACTED INSURANCE, AND HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Payment is expected at the time of service for all self-pay patients. If you have other insurance coverage that we do not file, you will be responsible for payment in full at the time of service. We will provide you with a copy of the fee ticket that can be submitted to your insurance company for direct reimbursement to you. If payment plans are necessary for any previously acquired balances please contact our business office to determine arrangements.

For patients who participate in **Health Savings Accounts**, we will file the claim to your insurance carrier in order for you to obtain the contractual adjustment, and then the balance is due upon receipt of our statement. For your convenience, you can pay your balance online at www.pediatricsoffranklin.com, or by phone with credit card/ debit card, or by mail.

FILING HOSPITAL CHARGES

As a courtesy, we will file all hospital insurance claims, regardless of the insurance, provided that the insurance information is submitted to our business office. The insurance claim for hospital charges will be mailed to you and become your responsibility if we cannot identify your insurance carrier. Payment for this service is due upon receipt unless other payment arrangements are made. Please call our billing office if you have any questions. Newborns must be added to your policy within the first 30 days of life in order to receive insurance benefits. Please do this as soon as possible.

VERIFICATION OF INSURANCE

Proof of insurance is required by providing your card at each visit. This is done to ensure that we are a participating provider in your plan and that all information and/or changes have been documented correctly in our computer. Please inform our receptionist of any changes in your insurance coverage, address, phone, etc. To avoid appointment delays and to expedite your visit, please bring your insurance card with you and present it at each visit.

SELECTING A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

If you participate in a health maintenance organization (HMO) and your plan requires that you select a Primary Care Physician (PCP), your card must list one of our doctors or you will have to pay at the time of service. Please contact your insurance company if you have any questions regarding this requirement of your plan.

REFERRALS

If our pediatricians recommend that your child see a specialist and your insurance company requires a referral we request at least **48 hours** to process the referral. With the exception of the first visit to a Vanderbilt Specialist's office, you will need to contact the specialist's office and schedule an appointment prior to requesting the referral. Once the appointment has been scheduled, please provide our referral coordinator with the physician's name, phone number, fax number, appointment date, name of child to be seen, and date of birth. The referral will be processed and sent directly to the consulting physician's office. However, it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the referral was received prior to the scheduled appointment date. By contacting the specialist's office directly you can avoid unnecessary charges. If referrals are required by your insurance policy, you will be responsible for all charges unless it is obtained. Please note that our insurance contracts prohibit us from issuing "retroactive" referrals. We are not permitted by your insurance company to process a referral for a specialist or an emergency room visit after that visit has occurred. Any questions regarding this process should be directed to our referral coordinator.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

For prescription refills, we offer an online refill service or a telephone refill service for your convenience. To utilize the online refill service, please visit our website at www.pediatricsoffranklin.com and set up a **secure account** for your family. When contacting our refill service by phone or online please provide your prescription information, including patient's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, physician's name, child's date of birth, and the name and telephone number of the pharmacy. **ADD/ADHD medications that are not e-prescribed directly to the pharmacy must be picked up from our office by the legal guardian. We will request to see a valid driver's license prior to releasing a controlled substance.** We will make every effort to call in, e-prescribe, or fax prescriptions within 24 hours of your telephone call during regular business hours. Please allow this amount of time so that your prescription does not run out.

HOSPITALS WHERE OUR PHYSICIANS ARE CREDENTIALLED

Our board-certified doctors see newborn babies delivered at Williamson Medical Center, Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, and Saint Thomas Midtown (formerly Baptist Hospital). Babies born at the Tri-Star Hospitals will be seen by the Neonatologist and they will provide us with information prior to be seen in our office. Children with illness requiring hospitalization are admitted to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville or the Williamson Medical Center location in Franklin, and the Children's Hospital at TriStar Centennial.

HOSPITAL CARE FOR YOUR NEWBORN BABY

One of the most rewarding aspects of a pediatrician's career involves dealing with newborn infants and their parents. Within the first 24 hours after your child's birth, your baby will have a complete physical examination by one of our pediatricians in the group and each subsequent day that you are in the hospital. Feeding orders are based on the baby's size and condition. You will be notified each day of the baby's progress and any problems will be discussed. Common problems include poor feeding, diarrhea, infrequent urination, fever, and jaundice.

Most healthy newborn infants will be discharged within 48 hours. **Your baby will be examined every day until discharged.** Prior to discharge, your baby will also have the Newborn State Screening test. Before you go home, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about newborn care. **Please contact us at 615-790-3200 the day of your discharge to schedule your newborn's first appointment in our office. Your pediatrician will inform you when they want to see your baby.** Prior to that time please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.

ONLINE PATIENT REGISTRATION

You can now access our website at www.pediatricsoffranklin.com and follow the instructions to create a **secure user account** for your family. This allows you to register your child online to make that first appointment easier for everyone. Complete the **patient registration** and **health history forms** and we'll have them printed and in your child's medical record when you arrive or if you prefer you can print them and bring them to your first appointment. **Please plan to arrive at least 20 minutes early for your child's first appointment.**

IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH MAINTENANCE VISITS

The purpose of a **health maintenance visit** is to assess the overall health of your child as well as to give anticipatory guidance. This includes following his or her growth, development, and emotional well being as well as screening for any hidden health problems and immunizing against certain infectious diseases. **Check with your insurance company regarding how often they will pay for Health Maintenance Visits.**

This is the best time, rather than at sick visits, to discuss routine concerns about behavior or development. More complex or involved problems may require a separate visit to allow adequate time to address the problem thoroughly. Our goal is to provide good care while meeting all of your child's needs.

Please try to call as far in advance as possible to schedule your child's health maintenance visit. Make sure to tell the scheduler that you need an appointment for a well-child check-up and state your child's age and primary physician. If you have any special concerns about your child, be sure to mention this when you schedule the check-up so adequate time can be allocated. We are especially busy in July and August with school physicals so please try to plan ahead.

If your child is sick on the day of their scheduled physical, do not cancel the appointment. The illness will be addressed at the time of the physical, though immunizations may need to be put off until the child is well.

When scheduling health maintenance visits for more than one child, it is recommended that no more than two children from the same family be scheduled back to back. This is done so that each child can be given adequate time for the visit and to answer all questions.

HEALTH MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE:

Our routine health maintenance visits occur at these ages:

2 weeks	6 months	15 months
2 months	9 months	18 months
4 months	12 months	2 years

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends annual health maintenance visits beginning at the age of 2 years through college.

PROBLEMS AFTER HOURS & PEDIATRIC TRIAGE PROTOCOLS

Our practice pays a **\$15.00 per call fee** for after hours phone triage service for patients who are experiencing situations that can't wait until the office opens. Call **615-790-3200** and your call will be answered by a skilled pediatric triage nurse. One of our physicians is also on call to assist the triage nurse in case of a serious concern. If you feel that your child's condition represents an emergency, call 911 or take your child to the nearest hospital emergency room. **Please call with routine questions that are not an emergency (diaper rash, colic, feeding, teething, etc.) during regular business hours. You may also find answers to most routine questions through our Pediatric Triage Protocol section called, "Is Your Child Sick" on our home page at www.pediatricsoffranklin.com.** These are the same protocols used by our triage phone nurses during regular business hours.

TELEPHONE TRIAGE AND INFORMATION

Our specially trained nurses answer questions and triage patients who need to be seen by the physician during office hours. They are well educated about childhood problems and can answer the questions that most parents have regarding common illnesses, minor injuries, and parental concerns. Sometimes the nurse will take a phone number and call a parent back after consulting with a doctor. If a parent asks to talk to a doctor rather than a nurse, the doctor will return the call as soon as possible, which is usually at lunchtime for morning calls or late afternoon for afternoon calls. Please call during daytime office hours for concerns such as medication refills, laboratory results, and any routine health questions you may have. Some questions may be adequately handled over the phone, but often we'll advise you that your child may need to be seen in order to be appropriately diagnosed and treated.

LABORATORY

Our office laboratory is staffed and equipped to perform many routine lab tests such as cultures, blood counts, urinalysis, quick-strep tests, etc. However, due to various insurance contracts, most lab work must be sent to outside reference labs. If your child's lab work is sent out then you will receive a separate bill from that specific lab. X-rays and other tests are performed at local imaging centers or hospitals in accordance with your insurance requirements.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

Check, cash, debit, MasterCard, Visa, Discover, and American Express are accepted for your convenience. If for some reason full payment cannot be made it will be necessary for you to arrange acceptable payments with our business office representative. Recurring Payment Plans are available for large balances.

RETURN CHECK CHARGE

If your check is returned for any reason, a thirty five dollar **(\$35)** return check charge will be assessed to your account. Cash or credit cards are accepted to pay for these charges and is expected upon notification. However, after two returned checks we will no longer accept checks as payment for services.

OVERDUE ACCOUNTS

Please follow up with your insurance company if you don't receive your explanation of benefits (EOB) indicating that payment has been made to Pediatric Associates of Franklin **30 days** after the date of service. In accordance with our accounting policies, accounts not paid within **45 days** can be transferred to the patient for payment. At that time the payment is due from the patient upon receipt of our statement. It will then be the responsibility of the patient to obtain reimbursement from their insurance company. If your account is placed with a collection agency, you will be responsible for all costs of collection, including the service charge percentage and attorney fees charged by the agency.

COLLECTIONS

Accounts turned over to the collection agency will be dismissed from our practice effective on the date the account is turned over to the agency. Once past collection balances have been paid to the collection agency we will be happy to reinstate your children as patients. We allow ample time for patient balances to be paid and provide payment plans if needed. Collection agencies reserve the right to report debt to national credit bureaus. We would like to avoid this from happening to your account balance. Please call our office to discuss payment options.

PATIENT'S FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

These policies are designed to provide you with information and understanding of your financial responsibilities as well as ours. In today's rapidly changing healthcare environment, insurance plans and coverage can become very confusing. Insurance coverage is a contract between you and your individual insurance carrier. Coverage varies within the same insurance company dependent upon the type of plan that has been chosen by you or your employer. For clarification regarding your coverage please check with your insurance company's customer service representative or the Human Resources department of your employer.

CONTRACTED INSURANCE PLANS

Pediatric Associates of Franklin has contracted directly with several insurance companies to provide services to its members. We do not participate in all plans. Please contact our office to verify that we accept your insurance plan. For Out of Network plans you will need to pay at the time of service and file your own insurance since we are not a contracted provider. Although we make every effort to help with insurance, please remember that you are ultimately responsible for your medical bills. Any questions regarding the plans in which we participate can be directed to our business office. Our billing department is here to assist you Monday through Friday from **8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.** Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions at **615-550-9850 or 615-790-3200.**

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Our professional fees are based on the services provided by our physicians. As a courtesy to our patients, we will file your claim for insurance with the plans we are contracted with. Co-payments and Deductibles are collected at the time of service per our agreement with your insurance plan. This is a contractual agreement that we are required to abide by in order to stay in compliance with our contracted insurance plans. **Patients are required to pay co-payments, and/or deductible amounts, and unpaid balances at the time of service.** We attempt to verify your eligibility and coverage prior to your visit, if available from your insurance company. Additionally, if we provide services that are identified as non-covered items by your insurance plan, they will be due at the time of service. Ensuring payment from your insurance carrier is the responsibility of the guarantor of the account.