



The policies at Primary Care - Lakeside are designed to make the care we provide more streamlined, efficient, and patient-centered for you.

1. **Appointments**

We pride ourselves on taking your time seriously and hope you will do the same for us. If you are running more than 15 minutes late, you have the option of waiting to see if any other patients cancel or do not show, or you can reschedule an appointment in the next available time slot.

If you are a new patient, we expect you to arrive 30 minutes prior to your appointment unless you have already completed your new patient paperwork, then arrival is 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. We like to have you in the room and ready for the provider at your appointment time.

2. **Phone Medicine**

We prefer to diagnose your illness in the office instead of over the phone. We hope that our expanded hours and same day scheduling will accommodate your busy schedule and enable you to come in and see us for the best possible medical care. With our patient portal, you will have an opportunity to message your doctor about follow-up questions and concerns in the near future.

3. **Late/No Show Policy**

Running Late: We pride ourselves on taking your time seriously and hope you will do the same for us. If you are running more than 15 minutes late, you have the option of waiting to see if any other patients cancel or do not show, or you can reschedule an appointment in the next available time slot.

No Shows: We recognize that things happen so we allow for three excused no show appointments. A 4th no show for an appointment within a 12 month time period is grounds for a \$25 fee and potential dismissal from the practice.

Late Cancellations: All appointments cancelled with less than 24 hour notice will be considered a late cancellation. Late cancellations are handled just like no show appointments. Three late cancellations within a twelve month time period will be excused, however a fourth will be grounds for a \$25 fee and potential dismissal from the practice. Please try whenever possible to cancel an appointment greater than 24 hours in advance if you know you will not be able to make it. This gives us the opportunity to offer the appointment to another patient who needs it.

4. **After Hours Care**

If you have a serious emergency, please call 911 or go directly to the nearest emergency room. We recommend Washington Health System Emergency Care Center for its exceptional care in a completely renovated state-of-the-art facility. A provider is on call at all times for Lakeside Primary Care and are available after hours for phone consultation or weekend emergencies. Please call our office number to reach the doctor on call. Please be considerate and do not use this service for non-urgent needs that can be handled during regular business hours.

5. **Frequency of Medical Visits**

At Primary Care - Lakeside, our goal is to provide the best care possible for you and your family. In order to do that, we need to get to know you and your health care needs.

- We recommend that healthy adolescent and adult patients be seen yearly for a physical.
- Those with stable chronic medical problems (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, depression, etc.) should be seen a minimum of twice yearly.
- Those with uncontrolled medical problems will need to be seen more often.
- Pediatric patients follow a more rigorous schedule of visits depending on their age and health care needs.

6. **Medication Refills**

- If possible, it is best to get refills during your regular office appointment. For your convenience, we have medication on-site at LPC or we can e-prescribe your prescriptions directly to your pharmacy. We can also print prescriptions for you to send away to mail-order pharmacies.
- If you obtained your medication from LPC, please call the office to discuss refills.
- If you obtained your medication from a pharmacy, please call the pharmacy and have them fax a request to our office.
- Please give our office two business days to complete the refill process.
- Please note that no prescription refills are done after hours or on weekends.
- If you are unable to refill your prescription, it may be that you are due for an office visit, lab work, or testing. Please call the office and we will assist you in making arrangements to have necessary testing done.

7. **Addictive Substances Policy**

- Chronic use of addictive medication presents unique challenges in primary care. At Primary Care - Lakeside, we prefer that our patients use Pain Medicine Specialists for chronic pain medication and psychiatrists for chronic anti-anxiety medications. We are extremely selective in prescribing addictive medications of any type. We have very strict policies and make no exceptions.
- Unwillingness to follow our medical recommendations concerning the use of addictive medications will result in dismissal from the practice.

8. **Insurance Information**

If you carry a Health Maintenance Plan, or HMO, you must call them to change your PCP. They will establish an effective date. Our office cannot schedule you until this step is completed. Some insurance companies have deadlines, so depending on when you call, you may not become effective with our office until the following month.

Each insurance plan is different, so always be aware of your coverage. Some common HMO plans are Keystone Blue, Security Blue, All PA State Medicaid Plans, and UPMC HMO Plan. The rule of thumb is, if there is a doctor listed on your card you need to call!

If you have not changed your PCP prior to your appointment you may be asked to reschedule. Our office staff cannot make this change for you and your office visit could be denied.

At Primary Care - Lakeside, we hope our office is everything you are looking for in a primary care practice. If you have questions other than those listed below, please call our office and our staff will be glad to help you in any way. Please navigate our website as well to find more information about our fresh new approach to primary care.

What should I expect at my visit?

You will be pleasantly greeted at our front desk where you will check in and provide the necessary identification and insurance information to our staff. Any forms needing to be filled out will be handled at check-in as well. From there you will be seated in our comfortable waiting room until one of our staff brings you back to our triage room where your vitals signs can be taken privately. The staff member will then review your medications and get your chart ready for the doctor to see you. She will take you from triage room into one of our beautiful, state-of-the-art exam rooms for your visit with your doctor. Please note that this check-in and triage time will take approximately 15 minutes, after which your doctor will be in to see you. We strive to stay on time, so please have your top three concerns ready to ask your doctor. Most of our appointments are scheduled for 15 minute time intervals. If you have a long list of concerns, please recognize that we may need to schedule another appointment in order to address all of your concerns with the time they deserve.

What hours are you open?

Our practice aims to have more access for your convenience. We will be open two evenings per week and selected Saturdays to fit into your busy life. The hours of operation are subject to change, but in general will be:

Monday 8am-6pm
Tuesday 8am-5pm
Wednesday 8am-6pm
Thursday 8am-6pm
Friday 8am-3pm
Saturdays 8am-12pm

What if I have a problem after hours or on the weekend?

If you have a serious emergency, please call 911 or go directly to the nearest emergency room. We recommend Washington Health System Emergency Care Center for its exceptional care in a completely renovated state-of-the-art facility. A provider is on call at all times for Lakeside Primary Care and are available after hours for phone consultation or weekend emergencies. Please call our office number to reach the doctor on call. Please be considerate and do not use this service for non-urgent needs that can be handled during regular business hours.

How can I make an appointment?

Please call 724-969-1001 and our staff will help you make an appointment that suits your schedule. To accommodate everyone's needs, we offer appointments day, weeks, or months in advance as well as same day scheduling for established patient acute needs. If you have an acute need, please call us and we will try to get you as soon as possible. Appointments for acute or chronic needs can be made the afternoon before (for the next morning) or scheduled on the same day. We prefer to advance schedule all new patients and hospital follow-up appointments.

With the implementation of our patient portal, you will be able to request appointments online in the near future.

What should I bring to my appointment?

In order to serve your needs in the best and most efficient way, please bring all of your medication bottles to all of your appointments. Please also bring photo ID, insurance information, and a list of your top three concerns to cover during your appointment. Please also bring any copayments that may apply.

What should I do if I am late for an appointment or I forget I have one and I miss it?

- **Running Late:** We pride ourselves on taking your time seriously and hope you will do the same for us. If you are running more than 15 minutes late, you have the option of waiting to see if any other patients cancel or do not show, or you can reschedule an appointment in the next available time slot.
- **No Shows:** We recognize that things happen so we allow for three excused no show appointments. A 4th no show for an appointment within a 12 month time period is grounds for a \$25 fee and potential dismissal from the practice.
- **Late Cancellations:** All appointments cancelled with less than 24 hour notice will be considered a late cancellation. Late cancellations are handled just like no show appointments. Three late cancellations within a twelve month time period will be excused, however a fourth will be grounds for a \$25 fee and potential dismissal from the practice. Please try whenever possible to cancel an appointment greater than 24 hours in advance if you know you will not be able to make it. This gives us the opportunity to offer the appointment to another patient who needs it.

If I don't have time to come in, can you treat me over the phone?

Good question and here's our answer....we always prefer to diagnose your illness in the office instead of over the phone. We hope that our expanded hours and same day scheduling will accommodate your busy schedule and enable you to come in and see us for the best possible medical care. With our patient portal, you will have an opportunity to message your doctor about follow-up questions and concerns in the near future.

How often do I need to see the doctor?

- We recommend that healthy adolescent and adult patients be seen yearly for a physical.
- Those with stable chronic medical problems (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, depression, etc.) should be seen a minimum of twice yearly.
- Those with uncontrolled medical problems will need to be seen more often.
- Pediatric patients follow a more rigorous schedule of visits depending on their age and health care needs.

How do I get medication refills?

- If possible, it is best to get refills during your regular office appointment. For your convenience, we have medication on-site at LPC or we can e-prescribe your prescriptions directly to your pharmacy. We can also print prescriptions for you to send away to mail-order pharmacies.
- If you obtained your medication from LPC, please call the office to discuss refills.
- If you obtained your medication from a pharmacy, please call the pharmacy and have them fax a request to our office.
- Please give our office two business days to complete the refill process.
- Please note that no prescription refills are done after hours or on weekends.
- If you are unable to refill your prescription, it may be that you are due for an office visit, lab work, or testing. Please call the office and we will assist you in making arrangements to have necessary testing done.

What is your policy about narcotic prescriptions?

- Chronic use of addictive medication presents unique challenges in primary care. At Lakeside Primary Care, we prefer that our patients use Pain Medicine Specialists for chronic pain medication and psychiatrists for chronic anti-anxiety medications. We are extremely selective in prescribing addictive medications of any type. We have very strict policies and make no exceptions.
- Unwillingness to follow our medical recommendations concerning the use of addictive medications will result in dismissal from the practice.

Do I have to call my insurance company to alert them that I am changing Primary Care Providers?

If you carry a Health Maintenance Plan, or HMO, you must call them to change your PCP. They will establish an effective date. Our office cannot schedule you until this step is completed. Some insurance companies have deadlines, so depending on when you call, you may not become effective with our office until the following month.

Each insurance plan is different, so always be aware of your coverage. Some common HMO plans are Keystone Blue, Security Blue, All PA State Medicaid Plans, and UPMC HMO Plan. The rule of thumb is, if there is a doctor listed on your card you need to call!

If you have not changed your PCP prior to your appointment you may be asked to reschedule. Our office staff cannot make this change for you and your office visit could be denied.