

# NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT OUR PRIVACY OFFICER.

## PURPOSE

We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal and we are committed to protecting that information. We create a record of the care and services you receive at Colon & Rectal Specialists, Ltd. in order to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements,

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose medical information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and your related health care services to carry out your treatment, obtain payment for our services, to perform the daily health care operations of this practice and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. This Notice also describes your rights to access and control your medical information.

We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices.

## WRITTEN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

You will be asked to sign a written statement acknowledging that you have been provided the Notice. The acknowledgement only serves to create a record that you have been provided the Notice. To receive a copy of this Notice, please contact our Privacy Officer.

## CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We may change the terms of our Notice at any time. The new Notice will be effective for all medical information that we maintain at that time. Upon your request, we will provide you with any revised Notice of Privacy Practices. To request a revised copy, you may call our office and request that a revised copy be sent to you in the mail or you may ask for one at the time of your next appointment.

## HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

The following categories describe the different ways that Colon & Rectal Specialists may use and disclose your medical information and a few examples of what we mean. These examples are not meant to describe every circumstance, but to give you an idea of the types of uses and disclosures that may be made by our office. Other uses and disclosures of your medical information that are not listed or described below will be made only with your written authorization. You may revoke this authorization, at any time, in writing, but it will not apply to any actions we have already taken.

**FOR YOUR TREATMENT:** Your medical information may be used and disclosed by us for the purpose of providing medical treatment to you or for another health care provider providing medical treatment to you. For example, a nurse obtains treatment information about you and documents it in your medical record and the physician has access to that information. If you require an x-ray to be taken, the x-ray technician has access to your medical information. In addition, your medical information may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred or are otherwise seeing to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you.

**TO OBTAIN PAYMENT FOR OUR SERVICES:** Your medical information may be used and disclosed by us to obtain payment for your health care bills or to assist another health provider in obtaining payment for their health care bills. For example, we may submit requests for payment to your health care insurance company for the medical services that you received. We may also disclose your medical information as required by your health insurance plan before it approves or pays for the health care service we recommend for you.

**FOR OUR HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS:** Your medical information may be used and disclosed by us to support our daily operations. These health care operation activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training of medical students, licensing, fund raising activities, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. We may use the medical information we have to determine where we can make improvements in the services and care we offer.

**FOR THE HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS OF OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:** We may also use your medical information to assist another health care provider treating you with its quality improvement activities, evaluation of the health care professionals or for fraud and abuse detection or compliance. For example, we may disclose your medical information to another physician to assist in its efforts to make sure it is complying with all rules and related to operating a medical practice.

**FOR APPOINTMENT REMINDERS:** We may use or disclose your medical information to contact you to remind you of your appointment, by mail or by telephone. Our message will include the name of our practice or the name of our physician as well as the date and time for your appointment or a reminder that an appointment needs to be scheduled.

**TO PROVIDE YOU WITH TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES:** We may use or disclose your medical information to provide you with information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. For example, we may contact several home health care agencies or physical therapy providers to discuss the services they provide when we have a patient who needs these services.

**TO OUR BUSINESS ASSOCIATES:** We will share your medical information with third party "business associates" that perform various activities (e.g. billing, transcription services) for the practice. Whenever an arrangement between our office and a business associate involves the use or disclosure of your medical information, we will have a written agreement that contains terms that will protect the privacy of your medical information. For example, Colon & Rectal Specialists, Ltd... has a transcription service it uses to perform our dictation. Your medical information will be disclosed to this billing company, but a written agreement between our office and the transcription company will prohibit the transcription company from using your medical information in any way other than what we allow.

**OTHERS INVOLVED IN YOUR HEALTH CARE:** Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, your medical information that directly relates to that person's involvement in your health care. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment. We may use or disclose your medical information to notify a family member or any other person who is responsible for your care of your location and general health condition. Finally, we may use or disclose your medical information to an authorized public or private entity to assist in (1) disaster relief efforts and (2) to coordinate uses and disclosures to family or other individuals involved in your health care.

**AS REQUIRED BY LAW:** We may use or disclose your medical information to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

**FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITIES:** We may disclose your medical information for public health activities and purposes to a public health authority that is permitted by law to collect or receive the information. The disclosure will be made for the purpose of controlling disease, injury or disability. We may also disclose your medical information, if directed by the public health authority, to any other government agency that is collaborating with the public health authority.

**AS REQUIRED BY THE FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION:** We may disclose your medical information to a person or company required by the Food and Drug Administration to report adverse events, product defects or problems, biologic product deviations, or to track products; to enable product recalls; to make repairs or replacements; or to conduct post marketing surveillance, as required.

**FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASE EXPOSURE:** We may disclose your medical information, if authorized by law, to a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may otherwise be at risk of contracting or spreading the disease or condition.

**TO YOUR EMPLOYER:** We may disclose your medical information concerning a work related injury or illness to your employer if you are covered under your employer's policy in order to conduct an evaluation relating to medical surveillance of the work place or to evaluate whether you have a work-related injury, in accordance with the law.

**FOR ABUSE OR NEGLECT:** We may disclose your medical information to a public health authority that is authorized by law to receive reports of child or adult abuse or neglect. In addition, we may disclose your medical information if we believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence as may be required or permitted by Virginia and/or federal law.

**FOR HEALTH OVERSIGHT:** We may disclose your medical information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs (such as Medicare or Medicaid), other government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.

**IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS:** We may disclose your medical information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding, in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal (to the extent such disclosure is expressly authorized), and in certain conditions in response to a subpoena or other lawful request.



Colon & Rectal Specialists, Ltd.