GUIDELINES REGARDING PATIENT COMMUNICATION

The doctors, nurses, and others here at UMC want to do all we can to protect the health information we have about you and keep it private and secure. You have a right to that information and the right to talk, e-mail, or text your health care team about it. But, any time you talk, e-mail, or text there is a chance that someone you do not want to can hear or see what you say or write. Below is a list of some things that you and we can do to reduce those chances when we talk, e-mail or text.

Phone Calls
A. When we need to contact you, we will only speak to you, or people you have listed on the Communication form.
B. On the communication consent form you should list only the numbers you wish us to use to contact you.
C. If you are unable to answer our call, please check “yes” in the box under Messages if you want us to leave a message with the person who answers. If you do not want a message left please check “no”.

Emergency Contact
A. An Emergency Contact is a person you chose for us to call if we cannot reach you. An emergency message is when there is a real danger to you or someone else.

E-mail
A. Many patients would like to e-mail with their doctor or nurse. However it is important to remember that e-mail through your own e-mail account has many risks. These risks include:
   a. E-mails can be accidentally or intentionally forwarded to others or intercepted
   b. E-mails can be made public via the internet
   c. It is easy to put in the wrong address
   d. E-mails may be copied by others
   e. E-mails can be changed by others
   f. E-mails may introduce viruses into computers

B. E-mails are so risky, UMC cannot promise your e-mail will remain secure and private and UMC will not be held responsible for a problem unless it was caused by UMC’s intentional misconduct.
C. Before anyone at UMC can communicate with you by e-mail, you must sign the consent for e-mail on the communication consent form.
D. UMC cannot promise your e-mail message will be read within a certain time, thus you should NEVER use e-mail to ask your doctor or nurse about any emergency or urgent health problem.
E. If UMC has not responded to your e-mail message within a reasonable time, you should contact your clinic by phone to make certain your message was received.
F. Never use e-mail to discuss the following with your doctor or nurse: mental health problems, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV or AIDS, disability concerns, or drug abuse.
G. You need to let us know if there is information that you do not want us to send in an e-mail.
H. You need to protect your password and your access to your e-mail account. UMC is not responsible for information that is discovered through access of your e-mail account.
I. You will need to schedule an appointment if it is determined through your e-mail discussions that you should be seen in the clinic.
J. You need to notify UMC of a change in your e-mail address.
K. All e-mail messages should contain your full name, date of birth, and your doctor’s name.
L. You may cancel your consent to e-mail communication only in writing or by an e-mail message.

Patient Portal (NextMD)
A. The portal is a part of your UMC electronic medical record that you may access directly through a website. This website is very secure and all the information within the site is stored with the highest level of security and exceeds the federal requirements for medical record storage.
B. Through this website patients may:
   a. Email their doctor or nurse
   b. Request an appointment
   c. Request a refill on their medication
   d. Review lab and test results
C. The purpose of this site is to improve patient-doctor communication and for you to have access to your information when you need it. This service is provided at no additional cost to the patient.
D. Unlike regular e-mail, when using the patient portal to message your doctor or nurse all your information is private and safe. For this reason, this is the way we would prefer all our patients to communicate with us.
E. Information you submit in through the portal may be seen by UMC staff who will participate in your health care.
F. UMC will not release the contents of the portal without your written consent, except as required by law.
G. To use the portal, you must sign the consent form, receive a token to go to the website and create your own account and password. You need to protect your password and access to your account. UMC will not be responsible for any network problems beyond UMC’s control.
H. Patients may access the patient portal 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, UMC will only read your request during work hours: 8:30-4:45, Monday through Friday. UMC will try and respond to your message within 2 business days. If your doctor is out of the office, your request may be handled by another doctor, or held until your doctor returns to the office. If you do not have a response to your request within 2 days please call your clinic to make certain your request was received.
I. The portal should NEVER be used to request emergency or urgent medical needs.
J. UMC has the right to remove access to the portal at any time for any reason.
K. UMC is not responsible for any information you sent but we failed to receive due to technical failure.