

Trent C. Holmberg, M.D.

Patient-Provider Email and Text Messaging Policies

The use of email and text messages to communicate with this office is available as a convenience. Despite the risks involved, we believe the ease of using email and text communication can be a benefit to patient care within certain limitations. If you choose to email or text this office, you agree to be familiar with the policies and guidelines outlined below. Your decision to use email or text communication is strictly voluntary and your consent may be revoked at any time.

Policies and Guidelines for Using Email and Text Messaging with Dr. Holmberg's Office

When I may use email and text to communicate with Dr. Holmberg's office and they with me.

- Appointments and Reminders
- Medication refill requests or medication questions
- Billing questions
- General questions about your care that do not require an immediate response
- Sending forms and documents

When should I **NOT** use email or texts to communicate with Dr. Holmberg? Please Call instead.

- In an emergency or when you need an immediate response
- If you are experiencing any desire to harm yourself or others
- If you are experiencing a severe medication reaction
- To communicate personal or confidential information (for doctor's ears only). Discuss at appointment.
- If you do not want the contents of your email to be a part of your permanent medical record.
- To make medication changes. An appointment is required for all medication changes

What happens to the emails and texts I send and who has access to them?

- The email accounts we use to communicate with patients are accessed by both Dr. Holmberg and his office staff. If you need to communicate confidential information to Dr. Holmberg only, please do not send it via email or write "Confidential – For Dr. Holmberg Only" in the subject line OR wait until your appointment
- Email/Test messages marked as confidential may be seen by staff while carrying out administrative tasks
- Emails/Texts may be printed out and become part of your permanent paper or electronic health record
- Emails/Texts will be released along with the rest of your records if this office is legally required to do so

When will my email or text be read and when should I expect a response?

- Emails/texts are checked by either Dr. Holmberg or his staff on weekdays, during business hours.
- Emails/texts are not read on weekends, after business hours, or on major holidays
- Response time varies but is generally within 1-2 business days

Advantages to using email and text:

- Unlike voicemail, email/text allows you to see the question the doctor's office is responding to and have a written record of that exchange for future reference
- Email (sometimes text) allows for the rapid transmission of documents
- Unlike phone calls, emails/texts can be read privately without others overhearing.

Risks of using email and texts include, but are not limited to:

- Emails/texts may be seen by unintended viewers if addressed incorrectly or sent to the wrong number.
- Emails/texts may be intercepted by hackers, used to spread viruses or malware and redistributed or copied
- Someone posing as you could access your information
- Emails/texts may not be received if mistakenly sent to junk/spam folders, blocked or deleted
- Emails/texts are discoverable in litigation and may be used as evidence in court
- Emails/texts may be misunderstood or interpreted wrong thus negatively affecting treatment

What are my obligations?

- I must let Dr. Holmberg's office know immediately if my email address or phone number has changed
- I will call Dr. Holmberg's office if I do not receive a response to my email/text in a timely manner
- I will use email and text communication appropriately and only for the allowed purposes stated above
- I will advise Dr. Holmberg's office in writing if I do not want any email/text communication or reminders
- I understand that emails/texts may only be used to supplement my appointments and not as a substitute
- I will not use any foul, inappropriate, or offensive language.

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Steps Dr. Holmberg and his staff have taken to protect the privacy of my email and text communications:

Dr. Holmberg's Office:

- Purchased a secure business email plan and signed a BAA (business associate agreement with that email service.
- Has the ability to send emails in confidential mode requires the recipient to have a password. Therefore, for ease of use, confidential mode will only be used if a patient requests it or when necessary. Please note that emails from this office are currently not encrypted, but this is subject to change. Instead, emails are sent with a warning message at the bottom indicating the risks the patient accepts when using email communication
- Has a signed BAA with its VOIP carrier used to send text messages
- Purchased a HIPAA compliant patient portal that can be used to securely communicate if encryption is a concern
- Educated staff on the appropriate use and protection of email/texts along with HIPAA rules and regulations
- Will not transmit highly sensitive information/records via email unless authorized by the patient
- Will verify email addresses and any attachments before sending email messages containing PHI

What steps can I take to protect my privacy?

- Do not use your work computer/phone or work email account to communicate with Dr. Holmberg's office as your employer has a right to inspect emails/texts sent through the company's system
- Do not use a shared email account or group message to transmit messages
- Log out of your email account or turn off phone screen if you are away from your computer or device
- Carefully check the email address or phone number to ensure you send your message to the intended recipient.
- Avoid writing or reading emails or texting on a mobile device in a public place
- Avoid accessing email/text on a public Wi-Fi hotspot. Use data on mobile devices and activate a VPN
- Includes your first and last name and date of birth in messages to avoid any confusion

Additional Policies:

- Personal or confidential issues (for Dr. Holmberg's ears only) should be addressed during your appointment as emails/messages (text or portal) may be read by the office staff before being directed to Dr. Holmberg
- If the use of email/text is abused or if offensive or inappropriate, we reserve the right to block your email/phone number and take legal action if necessary
- Appointment reminders, questions, and practice changes or policies will often be emailed or texted if we cannot reach you by phone. If you do not wish to have any information sent to you by email, please contact us immediately
- Your use of email/text to communicate with this office (regardless of signing this agreement) automatically indicates that you acknowledge and accept the risks associated with such communication and also agree to not hold Dr. Holmberg or his office staff liable if an email/text is accidentally misdirected or intercepted due to human error or by cybercriminals

Trent C. Holmberg, M.D.

Email and Text Communication Consent

Text Messaging and Emails for Non-Treatment Purposes:

I authorize the practice of Trent C. Holmberg, MD to contact me by text message (SMS) and/or email for non-treatment, administrative purposes. These communications may include appointment reminders, scheduling or rescheduling appointments, billing notices, payment links, payment receipts, virtual appointment links, and notifications that documents or forms are available for review or signature. Text and/or email communication should not be used for in-depth clinical advice or in place of regularly scheduled visits.

Preferred Method (select one):

Text only Email only Both text and email Please do not text or email me for non-treatment purposes

Text Messaging and Emails for Treatment Purposes:

I authorize the practice of Trent C. Holmberg, MD to contact me via text message (SMS) and/or email for treatment-related purposes which may include, but is not limited to correspondence regarding:

- Appointment reminders or changes
- prescription refill requests, pharmacy issues, medication prior authorizations, medication questions or concerns
- change of address, phone number, email address, or emergency contact
- authorizations to release information
- requests for super bills, which contain diagnosis codes (PHI) and billing codes
- any other protected health information (PHI) not listed above

Preferred Method (select one):

Text only Email only Both text and email Please do not text or email me for Treatment purposes

Risks of Electronic Communication

I understand that text and email are not fully secure methods of communication and may not be encrypted unless done through a secure patient portal. Risks include mis delivery, unauthorized access, interception, loss of confidentiality, and delays. I further understand this practice cannot guarantee the security of any messages once they leave their systems.

Patient Responsibilities

I agree to provide accurate contact information, update the practice promptly if my information changes, maintain the security of my devices and accounts, refrain from using text or email for urgent or emergency matters, and seek emergency services when needed.

I understand that text and email should not and will not be used in place of regularly scheduled visits.

Right to Revoke Consent

I understand that I may revoke this Consent at any time by providing written notice and that revocation does not affect communications already sent.

Acknowledgment and Agreement

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, understand, and voluntarily consent to the use of text and/or email communication as described above.

Patient Name

Date of Birth:

Mobile Number

Email Address

Signature of Patient or Legal Representative

Date

Legal Representative Name:

Relationship to Patient