



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

We are pleased to provide patients with email communication services at PERK Plastic Surgery. Please read this Electronic Communications Policy and complete our Electronic Communications Consent Form to take advantage of this service.

In our clinic, most providers have the chance to communicate with patients by email. While email can be quick and simple, it also has some risks related to it. At PERK, email communication with patients are allowed where it improves efficiency and the relationship between the provider and the patient.

Email are not to be used for prescription renewals, request of laboratory results or to discuss time sensitive matters. We feel that the most appropriate method to diagnose and manage your health concerns is through an office visit. However, the following situations may be appropriate for email and text message communications:

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

Holiday hours
Promotions and events
Clinic policies and forms
Invoices

Text messages will ONLY be used for appointment reminders.

At times we may respond back to your email, but email should not be used to have on-going dialogue with PERK and it is NOT meant to replace a visit with your health care provider.

We will NOT respond back to text messages. Text messages will only be used for appointment reminders.

PERK recognizes the risks of email and text messaging and wants you to recognize it as well. Please make sure you read the following about the use and the Electronic Communications Consent Form will need to be signed before using email or receiving text message through our office.

Electronic communications offer many benefits, but requires safeguards that differ from other forms of communication, such as paper document, telephone and fax. Our office staff and physicians use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of text messages sent and email sent and received. However, because of the risks identified below, we cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of email communication.

PROCESS

Before email and text message will be used, the PERK Electronic Communications Consent Form must be signed first.

No urgent information should be communicated by email and text message

Some email will include a message that email communication is one-way and replies will not be looked at. You must be aware that security of email and text message at your end is your responsibility. You are encouraged to use personal email or phone and not work based email or phone for all electronic communications with PERK plastic surgery. The information of completed email and text messages may be added to your electronic medical record in order to create a permanent record.

It is your responsibility to notify us should your email and or phone number change at any point.

RISKS OF USING EMAIL OR TEXT

The patient should NOT agree to communicate with PERK via email and text message or text without understanding and accepting the following risks. The privacy and security of email or text cannot be guaranteed. Employers and online services may have a legal right to inspect and keep email that pass through their system. Email are easier to falsify than handwritten or signed hard copies. In addition, it is impossible to verify the true identity of the sender, or to ensure that only the recipient can read the email once it has been sent. Email can be forwarded, intercepted, circulated, stored or even changed without the knowledge or permission of the PERK staff or the patient. Email can easily misaddress an email and text message, resulting in it being sent to many unintended and unknown recipients. Email are permanent. Even after the sender and recipient have deleted their copies of the email back-up copies may exist on a computer or in cyberspace. The use of email to discuss sensitive information can increase the risk of such information being disclosed to third parties.

Email can be used as evidence in court.

CONDITIONS OF USING EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGE

PERK will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of email. Text message will only be used as appointment reminders. However, because of the risks outlined above, PERK cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of email and text message communication, and will not be liable for improper disclosure of confidential information that is not the direct result of intentional misconduct of the physician. Thus, patients must consent to the use of email and text message for patient information. Consent to the use of email and text message includes agreement with the following conditions:

Email and text messages to the patient concerning diagnosis or treatment may be printed in full and made part of the patient's medical record. Because they are part of the medical record, other individuals authorized to access the medical record, such as staff and billing personnel, will have access to those email and text messages.

Email and text message communication are not appropriate substitutes for clinical examinations. The patient is responsible for following up on PERK email and text message and for scheduling appointments where warranted.

Given that patient email and text messages are being used as a one-way mode of communication, the patient, under no circumstances should expect a response from any email and text message sent to PERK or its physicians/staff.

The patient should not use email and text message for communication regarding sensitive medical information, such as sexually transmitted disease, AIDS/HIV, mental health, developmental disability, or substance abuse. Similarly, the physician will not discuss such matters over email and text messages.

PERK is not responsible for information loss due to technical failures.

The patient will notify PERK should there be any change in email and text message phone number.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION BY EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGE

To communicate by email, the patient shall:

Limit or avoid using an employer's computer.

Inform PERK of any changes in patient's email address.

Review the email to make sure it is clear and that all relevant information is provided before sending to PERK.

Inform PERK that the patient received the email.

Take precautions to preserve the confidentiality of emails, such as using screen savers and safeguarding computer passwords.

Withdraw consent only by email or written communication to PERK.

Should the patient require immediate assistance, or if the patient's condition appears serious or rapidly worsens, the patient should not rely on email or text message. Rather, the patient should call our clinic for consultation or an appointment, visit our clinic office or take other measures as appropriate (such as going to the nearest emergency department).

EMERGENCY PROBLEMS

Email and text message should never be used for emergency problems. In the event of an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Hospital Emergency Room.

URGENT PROBLEMS

Email and text message should not be used for urgent problems. In these cases, the patient should call our office at 310-400-6180 to book an appointment. If it is after hours, the patient should call 310-400-6180 and have the answering service page the physician on call.

PATIENT OBLIGATIONS WHEN CONSENTING TO EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGE

Consent to the use of email and text message includes agreement with the following conditions: The patient shall not use email and text message for medical emergencies, urgent problems or other time sensitive matters. If the patient's email and text message requires or invites a response from the staff or physicians, and the patient has not received a response within a reasonable time period, it is the patient's responsibility to follow up to determine whether the intended recipient received the email and text message and when the recipient will respond. All email and text messages to or from the patient concerning diagnosis or treatment will be imported into and made part of the patient's electronic medical record. Because they are part of the medical record, other individuals authorized to access the medical record, such as administrative staff, will have access to those email and text messages. Medical staff may forward email and text messages internally to members of the Physician's staff if necessary for diagnosis, treatment, reimbursement, and other handling. Staff will not, however, forward email and text messages to independent third parties without the patient's prior written consent, except as authorized or required by law. The patient should not use email and text message for communication regarding sensitive medical information, such as information regarding sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS/HIV, mental health, developmental disability, or substance abuse. The patient is responsible for informing the office of any types of information the patient does not want to be sent by email and text message, in addition to those set out above.

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have read and fully understand this consent form. You understand the risks associated with the electronic communication between PERK physician/staff and you, and consent to the conditions outline herein, as well as any other instructions that the PERK physician/staff may impose to communicate with patients by email or text as outlined in the Electronic Communications Policy.

You acknowledge and understand that despite recommendations that encryption software be used as a security mechanism for electronic communications, it is possible that communications with the PERK using email and text message may not be encrypted. Despite this, you agree to communicate with PERK using email and text message with a full understanding of the risk. You acknowledge PERK physician/staff's right to, upon the provision of written notice, withdraw the option of communicating through email and text message. Any questions you may have had have been answered. You choose to receive electronic communications from PERK by email and text message at the number or address stated in your patient registration Form, including but not limited to communications about appointments, treatment, and payment.