

North Star Naturopathic Medicine

The Medical Practice of Dr. Christina Caselli, ND – Mount Shasta, California

Communication Guidelines

To serve you to the best of my abilities, I am clarifying my policies on how to communicate with me outside of your visit times. Unfortunately, direct contact with me outside of patient visits is not a sustainable communication model for me. In order to have the best working relationship possible, I am establishing the following ground rules to create realistic expectations for communication. As this is a work in progress, I greatly appreciate your patience and flexibility.

Clinic Hours

I see patients in Mt Shasta on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in person or via Telehealth. These days are filled with office visits, and I have very little time for anything else on those days. On Mondays and Fridays I work to fulfill all the orders and promises I made to my patients during the week as well as any new tasks that arise like refills, lab orders, etc. If I told you that I would order something for you during your visit, expect those things to be fulfilled on Mondays and Fridays.

I have an office assistant, Tania, to communicate with you outside of your visit times with me. She will get you scheduled for visits and generally answer any questions you may have. If it is something she is unable to answer, she will let me know and I will have her get back to you with the answer or a request to make an appointment to have your needs met by me directly.

My office assistant is not full-time; she works answering phone calls and emails 2 hours per day 5 days per week. To be more accessible, she tries to split those hours between the morning and the afternoon but that is not always realistic for her. We are not available 8 hours per day like most businesses, so things will happen a little more slowly than you might be used to with other businesses. Please be patient with us!

All communication should be going through Phone: 530-925-3221 or Email: info@northstarmedicine.com, which will get you directly to my assistant. If you have my old email address, drc@northstarmedicine.com, please discontinue using it.

Your visit fees are based on:

- 1) Time spent with me during your scheduled visit.
- 2) Any research I need to do on your behalf.
- 3) Any detailed treatment plans, lab orders, imaging orders, referrals, or Fullscript online supplement orders I recommended in your visit.
- 4) Creating notes in your medical records to ensure I know where we have been and where we are going with your treatment goals.
- 5) A review of lab or imaging orders between visits to see if anything is urgent before you are scheduled.
- 6) Medical records requests and refill requests outside of your office visits.

Phone: 530-925-3221
Fax: 1-888-974-1834

Info@NorthStarMedicine.com
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- 7) Creating superbills for insurance reimbursement if requested.
- 8) Communication with your insurance regarding denied lab orders or prior authorizations required for medications.
- 9) Referrals and tracking progress with specialist notes sent to my office.
- 10) Any other admin related task that comes up regarding your lab orders, imaging orders, insurance communications, or communications with any of your other providers.

Anything else will require a patient visit and can be in person or on the phone.

It is entirely reasonable to need to communicate with me outside of a visit without charge, including any follow up I requested from you or any clarifying questions about your treatment plan within 30 days of your last visit.

Some examples of appropriate email or phone communications outside of a visit:

- 1) I can't remember the supplement dispensary that I used to order from—would you remind me?
- 2) I was expecting an order (lab, referral, imaging, prescription, supplement) and it is not in. Would you make sure that went through?
- 3) I am confused as to when I am supposed to follow up with you—please clarify.
- 4) I lost my treatment plan or other handout; please send me another copy.
- 5) You told me in our last visit to let you know X, Y or Z. Here is the info you requested.
- 6) I need a superbill for our visit.
- 7) I wanted to make sure you can treat this new ailment I have been diagnosed with.
- 8) I need a refill on a medication.
- 9) I lost my lab order slip you gave me at our last visit—please resend a copy.
- 10) I need to pick up a test kit from your office. When would be a good time to come by and get it?
- 11) I forgot the special instructions you gave me for my lab order; can you remind me if I need to be fasting, etc.?
- 12) I got my lab work or imaging done and am wondering if it is back yet.
- 13) One of the supplements you have me on is currently unavailable; can you recommend an alternative?

Some Examples of communication that will require a visit:

- 1) I want to change a medication or supplement.
- 2) I have been taking X, Y, Z for some time now and want to know if I should still be taking it?
- 3) Here is a list of all my supplements; is there anything I should change?
- 4) I heard about this supplement—what do you think?
- 5) Can you recommend a supplement for X, Y, Z?
- 6) Is this food okay for me to eat?
- 7) Can you recommend foods for...
- 8) I have a new complaint and want to know what you recommend for it.

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- 9) I am having issues with the treatment plan you recommended (side effects, not getting better, etc.) and need a modification.
- 10) I want to update you on my progress.
- 11) My other provider ordered some lab work and I want your opinion.
- 12) My other provider put me on a new medication, and I want to know if it is safe in combination with the things you already have me taking.
- 13) Can you provide a referral to a specialist for X, Y, Z?
- 14) I hurt myself and think I need some imaging for it.

Medication Refills

- 1) I am happy to provide you with a refill in between visits unless it has been more than 1 to 2 years since our last visit.
- 2) It is your responsibility to make sure you get in touch with me at least 1 to 2 weeks before your refill is due at the pharmacy. I cannot guarantee I will have the time or ability to refill your medications on short notice, but I will always do my best to prevent you from running out of a medication if I can help it.
- 3) I am happy to change the quantity of a medication you are already getting. For example, you have been getting 30 tablets at a time and now you want to receive 90 tablets. You do not need a visit for this; just let me know the change and I will apply it with your next refill.
- 4) I am happy to change the pharmacy you are using at any time.
- 5) I will NOT change dosages or make any other medication changes outside of a visit. Those things need to be documented and you will have to make a visit for any medication modifications, even if it is very brief.

Lab Orders Outside of a Visit

- 1) There is a \$40 fee for obtaining a new lab order outside of a visit.
- 2) When you call for this service, make sure to let my office assistant know if you are requesting a lab order to be sent to LabCorp (to be billed through insurance) OR if you need to be scheduled for a blood draw to utilize the out-of-pocket, discounted lab prices I have available through Quest.
- 3) I offer lab orders outside of a visit as a way to save you time, money, and avoid unnecessary visits with me.
- 4) Spontaneous requests for lab orders are very time consuming and labor intensive for me on the back end, and I feel a \$40 charge is a very small fee for the work required.
- 5) I only provide this service if you don't have any new complaints we need to discuss before your lab order is placed.

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Urgent Pager

If you have an urgent medical question that cannot wait for a callback from my office assistant, call my urgent pager number at 530-918-8486. I will return your call ASAP. If I am out of town or out of service range, the call will be returned as soon as possible upon my return. I do not provide emergency medical services. I will try and help with an urgent issue when possible but may refer you to the Mercy Medical outpatient clinic or the ER if I am unavailable or the issue is beyond my expertise. There is a \$50 base charge for this service plus additional fees based on time spent on the phone once the call is initiated. **If you are experiencing a medical emergency requiring immediate care, call 911!**

Email

Emails should be brief, clear, and concise, and are a non-urgent form of communication. If your questions require more involved evaluation, my office assistant will request that you make an office visit. (See the list of examples of appropriate communication outside of a visit above.)

Every effort will be made to return your email within 5 business days. Though emails are usually answered within 1 business day, they can take longer. Emails will not be answered on weekends, holidays, or when we are out of town. In addition, email is not 100% confidential due to the nature of the internet and you except the risks of a potential confidentiality breach when emailing us. However, all effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

Text

Text notifications are turned off and will never be viewed by anyone at our office.

Thank you for understanding and cooperating with these communication guidelines. I know this is a unique doctor patient relationship and navigating this new experience is a learning process. I am providing you with these guidelines, so we can all have our needs met. If you are ever confused, don't hesitate to ask, we will help direct you in your individual situation if it ever feels unclear.

It is important to your healing process to view our relationship as a collaborative one engendered with mutual regard and respect and these guidelines will help us achieve that!