PATIENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

SECURE PATIENT WEB PORTAL & HEALOW APPLICATION

As part of our continuing effort at Advanced Fertility Care to bring our patients the latest in customer service and convenience, we have implemented a feature of our electronic medical record system (eClinicalworks) which offers secure viewing and communication as a service to patients who wish to view parts of their records and communicate with our staff and physicians. Secure messaging can be a valuable communications tool, but has certain risks. In order to manage these risks we need to impose some conditions of participation. This form is intended to show that you have been informed of these risks and the conditions of participation, and that you accept the risks and agree to the conditions of participation.

How the Secure Patient Portal Works:

A secure web portal is a type of webpage that uses encryption to keep unauthorized persons from reading communications, information, or attachments. Secure messages and information can only be read by someone who knows the right password or pass-phrase to log in to the portal site. Because the connection channel between your computer and the website uses secure sockets layer technology you can read or view information on your computer, but it is still encrypted in transmission between the website and your computer.

HEALOW App

This is a tool that may be used by our patients to easily access their medical records and schedule appointments either on mobile devices or directly on their computer desktop. This tool allows you to integrate multiple patient portals from participating medical practices into one place and provides you access to the same information available through our secure internal Patient Portal which is directly accessible through our website or through the portal login script you will be provided. The HEALOW App can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play Store, or may be accessed and setup directly through its website: http://www.healow.com. Your use of the HEALOW App constitutes that you have agreed to the specific privacy policy and limitations outlined during the initial set-up of your HEALOW account.

Protecting Your Private Health Information and Risks:

This method of communication and viewing prevents unauthorized parties from being able to access or read messages while they are in transmission. No transmission system is perfect and we will do our best to maintain electronic security. However, keeping messages secure depends on two additional factors:

1) the secure message must reach the correct email address, and
2) only the correct individual (or someone authorized by that individual) must be able to have access to the message.

Only you can make sure these two factors are present. It is imperative that our practice has your correct e-mail address and that you inform us of any changes to your e-mail address. You also need to keep track of who has access to your email account so that only you, or someone you authorize, can see the messages you receive from us.

You are responsible for protecting yourself from unauthorized individuals learning your password. If you think someone has learned your password, you should promptly go to the website and change it.
Types of Online Communication/Messaging:

Online communications should never be used for emergency communications or urgent requests. If you have an emergency or an urgent request, you should contact your physician via telephone.

In using the secure Patient Portal/HEALOW, we will be able to provide you another means of communicating with our administrative and clinical staff more efficiently. Future versions are anticipated to also allow the uploading of documents to individual patient portal accounts.

We highly recommend that our patients embrace use of the patient portal for means of communication between you and our office as it allows our Physicians and staff to send concise and detailed medication instructions and provides timely response to your non-urgent inquiries.

Should you opt out of this method of communication it may result in delays of receiving message from the physician or the office in a timely manner. For patients undergoing either IVF or Injectable IUI cycles use of the Patient Portal will be REQUIRED as our clinical staff will use this method to send instructions and medications updates.

This system will be integrated through your email account. You will receive notices via email when there is new information to be reviewed on the secure patient portal.

The email sender address will read: Advanced Fertility Care and the subject line will usually read: New Mail from your doctor’s office. The message will provide a link for you to follow to the secure portal webpage where you will enter the username and password provided to you by our staff at your new patient appointment.

SECURE and TRADITIONAL EMAIL

In addition to the Secure Patient Portal System, at times, we may also utilize both secured encrypted as well as standard email services to send documents and information to you.

Email communication provides for a fast and easy way to communicate with your healthcare team for those issues that are non-emergent, non-urgent or non-critical. It is not a replacement for the interpersonal contact that is the very basis of the patient-healthcare provider/team relationship; rather it can support and strengthen an already established relationship.

The following summarizes the information you need to determine whether you wish to supplement your healthcare experience at our practice by electronically communicating with staff members.

General Considerations

- Email communication will be considered and treated with the same degree of privacy and confidentiality as written medical records. We will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of e-mail information sent and received. However, because of the risks inherent in electronic communication, we cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of e-mail communication, and will not be liable for improper disclosure of confidential information that is not caused by Provider’s intentional misconduct. Thus, patients must consent to the use of e-mail for patient information.
- Standard email communication services, such as Gmail, GoDaddy, AOL, Yahoo and Hot Mail are NOT secure. This means that the email messages are not encrypted and can be potentially intercepted and read by unauthorized individuals. As a practice, we will refrain from sending any emails to you which may contain protected health information, via one of these unsecured email services.
- In the event that we need to contact you or send you documents electronically that cannot be accomplished through the Patient Portal System, we will utilize a Secure and Encrypted email service to do so. This will require you to set up a specific private password to retrieve messages or documents on your personal computer, and you will be prompted to do so with instructions upon opening the email in your in-box.
- Your email address will not be used for external marketing purposes without your permission. You may receive a group emailing from the practice, however; the recipients email addresses will be hidden.
Healthcare Team Responsibilities

- Your provider may route your email messages to other members of the staff for information purposes or for expediting a response.
- Designated staff may receive and read your email.
- All clinical/medically related messages MUST be sent via the secure Patient Portal, NOT via email.
- Every attempt will be made to respond to your non-clinical email messages within 2 business days (Monday – Friday, non-holidays). If you do not receive a response from the practice within 2 business days, please contact the practice by phone.
- Copies of emails sent and received from and to you could be incorporated into your medical record. You are advised to retain all electronic correspondence for your own files.

Patient Responsibilities

- Email messages should not be used for emergencies or time sensitive situations. In the event of a medical emergency, you should immediately call 911. For emergent or time sensitive situations, you should contact the practice by phone.
- Email messages should be concise. Please call our office and/or arrange for an office appointment if the issue is too complex or sensitive to discuss via email.
- The patient should NOT use standard e-mail for communication regarding sensitive medical information, such as information regarding sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, mental health, issues of abuse, developmental disability, or substance abuse.
- Please include your full name and the topic, (i.e. Billing Question, Signed Consents, etc) in the subject line. This will serve to identify you as the sender of the email.
- The patient is responsible for informing AFC in writing of any types of information the patient does not want to be sent by e-mail, in addition to those set out above.
- Please acknowledge that you received and read the message by return email to the sender.

VOICE AND TEXT MESSAGE APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

In addition to communication through the Patient Portal/HEALOW App as well as Secure Encrypted and Traditional Email Services, patients in our practice may be contacted via automated voice or text messaging to mainly remind you of an appointment, and more rarely to obtain feedback on your experience with our healthcare team, and to provide general health reminders/information.

AFC offers this messaging service to our patients through a product called HEALOW which is a feature of our electronic medical record system (eClinicalworks) and is provided on an as-is basis. As mentioned earlier in this document, HEALOW is a tool that may be used by our patients to easily access their medical records and schedule appointments either on mobile devices or directly on their computer desktop. Data obtained from you in connection with the HEALOW message system may include, but not be limited to: your name, address, cell phone number, office and location, future appointment dates and times, and account information. AFC is not liable for any delays that may be experienced during the transmission of any messages, as delivery is based on the speed and effectiveness of your wireless provider. The HEALOW App can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play Store, or may be accessed and setup directly through its website: http://www.healow.com.

Your use of the HEALOW App constitutes that: you are the person legally responsible for all use of the accounts, are at least 18 years of age, agree to all terms and conditions of use for the text messaging services, and have agreed to the specific privacy policy and limitations outlined during the initial set-up of your HEALOW account.