

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW EAST TN COLON & RECTAL SURGICAL ASSOCIATES MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR HEALTHCARE INFORMATION AND HOW YOU CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.
PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates is required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information. This information consists of all records related to your health, including demographic information, either created by East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates or received by East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates from other healthcare providers. We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.

We are required to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information. These legal duties and privacy practices are described in this Notice. East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates will abide by the terms of this Notice, or the Notice currently in effect at the time of the use or disclosure of your protected health information.¹

East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates reserves the right to change the terms of this Notice and to make any new provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. Patients will be provided a copy of any revised Notices upon request. An individual may obtain a copy of the current Notice from our office or on our website at any time.

Uses and Disclosures of Your Protected Health Information not Requiring Your Consent

East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates may use and disclose your protected health information, without your written consent or authorization, for certain treatment, payment and healthcare operations. There are certain restrictions on uses and disclosures of treatment records, which include registration and all other records concerning individuals who are receiving, or who at any time have received services for mental illness, developmental disabilities, alcoholism, or drug dependence. There are also restrictions on disclosing HIV test results.

Treatment may include:

- Providing, coordinating, or managing healthcare and related services by one or more healthcare providers;
- Consultation between healthcare providers concerning a patient;
- Referrals to other providers for treatment;
- Referrals to nursing homes, foster care homes, or home health agencies.

For example, East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates may determine that you require the services of a specialist. In referring you to another doctor, East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates may share or transfer your healthcare information to that doctor.

Payment activities may include:

- Activities undertaken by East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates to obtain reimbursement for services provided to you;
- Determining your eligibility for benefits or health insurance coverage;
- Managing claims and contacting your insurance company regarding payment;
- Collection activities to obtain payment for services provided to you;
- Reviewing healthcare services and discussing with your insurance company the medical necessity of certain services or procedures, coverage under your health plan, appropriateness of care, or justification of charges;
- Obtaining pre-certification and pre-authorization of services to be provide to you.

For example, East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates will submit claims to your insurance company on your behalf. This claim identifies you, your diagnosis, and the services provided to you.

Healthcare operations may include:

- Contacting healthcare providers and patients with information about treatment alternatives;
- Conducting quality assessment and improvement activities.
- Conducting outcomes evaluation and development of clinical guidelines;
- Protocol development, case management, or care coordination;
- Conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services, and auditing functions.

For example, East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates may use your diagnosis, treatment, and outcome information to measure the quality of the services that we provide, or assess the effectiveness of your treatment when compared in patients in similar situations.

East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates may contact you, by telephone or mail, to provide appointment reminders. You must notify us if you do not wish to receive appointment reminders.

We may not disclose your protected information to family members or friends who may be involved with your treatment or care without your written permission. Health information may be released without written permission to a parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child; the guardian of an incompetent adult; the healthcare agent designated in an incapacitated patient's healthcare power of attorney; or the personal representative or spouse of a deceased patient.

There are additional situations when East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates is permitted or required to use or disclose your protected health information without your consent or authorization. Examples include the following:

- As permitted or required by law.
In certain circumstances we may be required to report individual health information to legal authorities, such as law enforcement officials, court officials, or government agencies. For example, we may have to report abuse, neglect, domestic violence or certain physical injuries. We are required to report gunshot wounds or any other wound to law enforcement officials if there is reasonable cause to believe that the wound occurred as a result of a crime.
Mental health records may be disclosed to law enforcement authorities for the purpose of reporting an apparent crime on our premises.
- For public health activities.
We may release healthcare records, with the exception of treatment records, to certain government agencies or public health authority authorized by law, upon receipt of written request from that agency. We are required to report positive HIV test results to the state epidemiologist. We may also disclose HIV test results to other providers or persons when there has been or will be risk of exposure.

¹ This Notice prepared in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 45 C.F.R. 164.520.

We may report to the state epidemiologist the name of any person known to have been significantly exposed to a patient who tests positive for HIV. We are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect and suspected abuse of an unborn child, but cannot disclose HIV test results in connection with the reporting or prosecution of alleged abuse or neglect. We may release healthcare records, including treatment records and HIV test results, to the Food and Drug Administration when required by federal law. We may disclose healthcare records, except for HIV test results, for the purpose of reporting elder abuse or neglect, provided the subject of the abuse or neglect agrees, or if necessary to prevent serious harm. Records may be released for the reporting of domestic violence if necessary to protect the patient or community from imminent and substantial danger.

- For health oversight activities.
We may disclose healthcare records, including treatment records, in response to a written request by any federal or state governmental agency to perform legally authorized functions, such as management audits, financial audits, program monitoring and evaluation, and facility or individual licensure or certification. HIV test results may not be released to federal or state governmental agencies, without written permission, except to the state epidemiologist for surveillance, investigation, or to control communicable diseases.
- Judicial and Administrative Proceedings.
Patient healthcare records, including treatment records and HIV test results, may be disclosed pursuant to a lawful court order. A subpoena signed by a judge is sufficient to permit disclosure of all healthcare records except for HIV test results.
- For activities related to death.
We may disclose patient healthcare records, except for treatment records, to a coroner or medical examiner for the purpose of completing medical certificate or investigating a death. HIV test results may be disclosed under certain circumstances.
- For research.
Under certain circumstances, and only after a special approval process, we may use and disclose your health information to help conduct research.
- To avoid a serious threat to health or safety.
We may report a patient's name and other relevant data to the Department of Transportation if it is believed the patient's vision or physical or mental condition affects the patient's ability to exercise reasonable or ordinary control over a motor vehicle. Healthcare information, including treatment records and HIV test results, may be disclosed where disclosure is necessary to protect the patient or community from imminent and substantial danger.
- To workers' compensation.
We may disclose your health information to the extent such records are reasonable related to any injury for which workers compensation is claimed.

East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates will not make any other use or disclosure of your protected health information without your written authorization. You may revoke such authorization at any time, except to the extent that East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates has taken action in reliance thereon. Any revocation must be in writing.

Your Rights Regarding Your Protected Health Information

You have the right to request confidential communications. You may ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone). These requests must be in writing, may be revoked in writing, and must give us an effective means of communication for us to comply, if the alternate of communication incurs additional cost, the cost will be passed on to you. We will say "yes" to all reasonable requests.

You have the right to request restrictions on how your protected health information is used for treatment, payment, and health operations. We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say "no" if it would affect your care. If you pay for a service or healthcare item out of pocket in full, you can ask us not to share that information for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer. We will say "yes" unless a law requires us to share that information. We must have your restriction documented prior to initiating the service.

You have the right to review and/or obtain an electronic or paper copy of your healthcare records, with the exception of psychotherapy notes, or information compiled for use (or in anticipation for use) in a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding. East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates may deny an access under other circumstances, in which case you have the right to have such a denial reviewed. We may charge a reasonable fee for copying your records.

You have the right to request that East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates amend portions of your healthcare records, as long as such information is maintained by us. You must submit this request in writing, and under certain circumstances the request may be denied.

You may request to receive an accounting of the disclosures of your protected health information made by East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates for the six years prior to the date of the request, beginning with disclosures made after April 14, 2003. We are not required, however, to record disclosures we make pursuant to a signed consent or authorization.

You may request and receive a paper copy of this Notice, if you had previously received or agreed to receive the Notice electronically.

Any person or patient may file a complaint with East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates and/or the Secretary of Health and Human Services if they believe their privacy rights have been violated. To file a complaint with East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates, please contact the Privacy Officer at the following:

Privacy Officer
East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates
10810 Parkside Drive, Suite G12
Knoxville, TN 37934

It is the policy of East TN Colon & Rectal Surgical Associates that no retaliatory action will be made against any individual who submits or conveys a complaint of suspected or actual non-compliance or violation of the privacy standards.