

Treating a Minor Child

To Parents and Guardians of Minor Children (children under age 18 years old):

The providers and staff at Newport Family Practice, PC, place great emphasis on the health and well-being of each and every patient in our clinic. We appreciate that you have entrusted us to provide care to your minor child and we look forward to working with you to ensure that your child receives the best health care possible.

As a general rule, we require the consent of a **parent or legal guardian** to provide health care services to a minor child. Please read the following policies regarding our clinic providing services to your minor child(ren).

1. Regarding Legal Custody:

We understand that the biological parents of your child may no longer be together. For biological parents (or adoptive parents) who are no longer together but have shared legal custody of the child, for a parent who has sole legal custody of the child, or for appointed guardian(s) who has/have legal custody of the child, we require a copy of the court document(s) defining the legal custody arrangement before we can treat your child. Preferably, we request the documents from all parties who share legal custody (for example, a copy from the biological mother and a copy from the biological father). Legal custody is different than physical custody. Legal custody is who can make decisions on behalf of the child; physical custody is with whom the child lives. We require documentation of who has legal custody of the child. Please provide a copy of the court documents to our office.

2. Regarding Consent to Treat a Minor Child:

As a general rule, we require the consent of a parent or legal guardian in order to provide health care services to a minor child. Parents, or legal guardians, who have or share legal custody of the minor child are to complete the **Consent to Treat a Minor form**. Please request additional copies if needed for an additional parent or guardian not living in the same home. For example, if parents live together, they can complete the same form. If parents are not together, completing separate forms may be easier.

With so many parents working outside the home or with other commitments, we realize that you may not be able to accompany your minor child on every visit to the clinic. If your minor child presents with an adult other than the parent or legal guardian, we require documentation from the parent or legal guardian giving consent to treat. If consent to treat is not available from the parent or legal guardian, the appointment will be rescheduled.

In order to avoid having to reschedule your child's appointment, we have attached a **Consent to Treat a Minor when accompanied by an Adult other than the Child's Parent or Legal Guardian form** that will become part of your child's record once it is completed

by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Please note that a step-parent is not a legal guardian unless the step-parent legally adopted the child --- remember to authorize a step-parent if that person will be accompanying your child to future appointments. Again, if the parents/guardians who share legal custody are no longer together, we would like a **Consent to Treat a Minor when accompanied by an Adult other than the Child's Parent or Legal Guardian form** completed by all parties who share legal custody. This consent will remain in effect until revoked in writing. If the consent is signed for one visit only, a new consent will need to be completed for each office visit the child is unaccompanied by a legal parent or guardian. Adults authorized by you on the consent form will be required to have photo identification if they accompany your child to their appointment.

3. Regarding Pennsylvania law regarding consent to treat a minor without the consent of the parent or legal guardian:

It is the philosophy of this clinic to encourage minor patients to include a parent, guardian or other trusted adult in all aspects of their health care. However, for legal or other reasons involvement may not be possible due to Pennsylvania state law, including the treatment of a minor in the case of an emergency. If a minor consents to care as allowed by law, he or she can request confidentiality for that aspect of care which prohibits us from releasing this information to the parent or legal guardian without the minor's expressed written consent.

If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please contact our office or discuss with your child's primary health care provider at 717-567-3151.