

Stephanie K. Kraft MD PC Electronic Messaging Agreement

Electronic (online) messaging includes e-mail, webmail, secure messaging, electronic file transfer, text messaging and internet “portals” to exchange information between computers, tablets, smartphones. These can be useful ways for patients and healthcare providers to communicate, in addition to more usual visits and phone calls.

Advantages

- Electronic messaging is simple, convenient and a popular way of connecting;
- Messages can be sent and received without needing both parties online at the same time
- Messages can be saved, copied and forwarded; they keep a record of what was said
- Some messaging systems are encrypted to help keep information private
- Some questions and issues can be handled by online messaging without a phone call or visit

Disadvantages

- E-mail devices and connections can fail, messages can be lost or sent to the wrong person
- There is no way to know if a message was ever received
- Messages can contain typing mistakes
- If the other party is away or their device is turned off, messages might not be seen promptly
- It is possible for a dishonest person to send a false message or impersonate a patient or a doctor
- If both parties are not online at the same time, there is no opportunity to clarify misunderstandings
- Saved copies or messages sent in error can't be erased or retracted
- Messages can contain viruses that can damage systems or steal information
- Some medical questions and issues cannot be handled through online messaging

Our Electronic Messaging Policies

1. **No emergencies or urgent messages.** Electronic messaging is not to be used for emergencies or urgent messages. We do not monitor our inbox constantly. You can send a message any time, but we may not read it until the next business day. We check messages during regular work hours, and answer them in the order received. We try to deal with messages within one work day, but circumstances could cause us to fall behind. Use the telephone if you need a response right away. Of course, in a life-threatening emergency call 911.
2. **Uses.** Our practice accepts electronic messages for these purposes:
 - a. **General messages** like making or changing appointments, billing issues, or other questions that can be answered by any appropriate staff person. Send ALL health-related messages via the Elation Passport portal. Billing questions may also be e-mailed to billing@stephaniekraftmd.com.
 - b. **Medical questions.** Although we might sometimes reply after hours, you should not expect us to monitor electronic messaging continuously. Again, if you have a problem that needs attention right away, use the telephone.
 - c. **Prescription renewals.** You can request refills of medicines we have previously prescribed, the same way as leaving a phone message. If we have a question for you, we may respond by e-mail or phone.
3. **Part of the record.** Electronic messages are considered part of your medical record. Our policies for record privacy and appropriate uses of medical information apply to messages we send to each other.

4. **Security.** You need to protect the e-mail address you give us, to make sure our communications remain private. This is the only way we can trust that messages from your e-mail are really from you, and messages we send are not going to someone else. If we aren't sure about a message, we will try to contact you in some other way.

****We use Elation Passport for all secure e-mail, and we use Spruce for all text messaging.** Please do NOT e-mail or text message any health-related information in any other format; doing so violates Federal health privacy regulations, and we cannot ensure that your information remains private.
5. **Availability.** If you authorize us to use electronic messaging to communicate with you, we will assume that you check your inbox at reasonable intervals. We don't guarantee that we will respond to your messages and we understand you can't guarantee that you will respond to ours. In cases of uncertainty, we will try other ways of communicating.
6. **Sensitive medical information.** We can't always know what information you consider especially private. We take care with all medical records, but we know that some facts are more sensitive than others. Because electronic messaging can't be guaranteed 100% secure, please don't put extremely sensitive matters in messages without considering this.
7. **Voluntary.** Using electronic messaging is voluntary for both of us. If we feel you are using it inappropriately (or, if we think your address has been hacked by an imposter), we may block your messages. If you decide you don't want to receive electronic messaging from us any longer, just let us know.
8. **Changes of address.** If your e-mail address or mobile phone number changes, you need to let us know.
9. **Non-essential uses.** We will only use your e-mail address for important communications related to our practice. We will not give your e-mail address to anyone who is not part of our practice. Please don't send non-essential messages to us, because they slow down our ability to respond to the important ones.
10. **Mistakes.** Mistakes happen. If you believe you have received or sent a message by mistake, or one that contains errors, please let us know. You should delete messages that are not intended for you.
11. **Other risks.** In addition to those above, electronic communication can have other risks and disadvantages that might cause inconvenience or harm. Everyone using electronic messaging needs to use good judgment about these valuable technologies, and must remember that there are alternatives that would be better for some situations.

Acknowledgement and Agreement

I acknowledge that I have read this form. I understand that electronic (online) communication has risks, including possible risks not mentioned above. I agree to abide by the policies described above. I agree to use reasonable judgment with regard to any messages I send or receive. I do not have any unanswered questions about what this Agreement requires.

Patient (or legal representative) name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

E-mail address to be used: _____

Mobile phone number to be used with Spruce app: _____