

WELCOME TO BAYSIDE!



Bayside Pediatrics Bayside Family Practice Bayside Travel Medicine

This packet for new patients is intended to introduce you to our practice.

1. A brief history of Bayside, and who we are
2. A brief introduction of how we think about your medical care, prevention and treatment, and health education
3. General procedures in the office
4. After hours care
5. HMO's, PPO's, and knowing your insurance
6. Financial policies, and our business office
7. Our locations

Also, check out our website at www.baysidemed.com



BAYSIDE MEDICAL GROUP, INC.

A SHORT HISTORY OF BAYSIDE

Bayside was started by Budd Shenkin, M.D., as a solo pediatrics practice in Oakland in 1979. Through the 1980's and 1990's Bayside grew by adding pediatricians and offices, in Alameda, Pinole and Walnut Creek. We then acquired the family practice office in Berkeley, the pediatric offices in Pleasanton and Livermore, in 2002 we opened an office in San Ramon and in 2004 we opened our Tracy office. We now have over 35 physicians and several Nurse Practitioners and Physicians Assistants in our nine offices, all in the East Bay. All of our offices have pediatrics and our Berkeley and Alameda offices both have family practice. We also provide travel medicine services at our Berkeley and Alameda Offices, and more limited services in all the other offices.

As we have grown, our objective has been to retain the cardinal principles of a small practice – to be personal and non-bureaucratic – and at the same time to take advantage of professional management that a modern practice needs. With a group practice, we always have colleagues to consult if one of your conditions becomes complicated. If we are on vacation, someone else is there to fill in. If you want a second opinion, all you have to do is make an appointment with another one of our clinicians. In short, we practice team medicine.

We try very hard to remember at all times the only reason we are here is to serve you with the best medical care that we can. This is not an empty motto to us; we really mean it.

WHO WE ARE

We would like you to know who we are personally. To help you to get to know us we have written mini-biographies about ourselves. They are posted on our website, www.baysidemed.com. We urge you to go on-line and check us out.

WHAT WE DO

Why does a person become a doctor? For many reasons, of course, but the most important reason for us was to be able to help people. The next question is: why does that doctor choose to become a pediatrician or family physician?

We did it because we love children and families. We did not choose more technical specialties because, for us, nothing matches the satisfaction of becoming friends with our patients and families, and helping them to grow up and maintain themselves as healthy and happy as possible. We think we can help you in two different ways: one in health, and one in sickness.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

In your normal times of being well, we think in terms of preventive medicine. One type of preventive medicine is health promotion: how to live in a healthy way, understanding development, nutrition, child discipline, exercise, and so on. A second type of prevention is avoiding disease: for instance, advice on how and when to baby-proof the house, give immunizations, detect and control cholesterol levels, etc. A third type of prevention is early detection: looking for early signs of disease, so treatment can be started early.

In our practice, we try to emphasize prevention a great deal. We try to schedule frequent preventive visits to check on health status and childhood growth and development, answer your questions, and promote health education. In many ways we feel these are our most important services.

In order to prevent illness and to promote good health, we need to see you regularly. For the first year of life we see children a great deal, because so much is happening with growth and development and the formation of new family dynamics; after that, the intervals grow longer; but it is important to keep coming regularly. We don't know exactly

why, but those patients who keep up their well child visits seem to do better, to have fewer problems than those who don't. Even if your life is going smoothly (and long may that be the case), it can give a sense of security to your child to know clearly who his or her doctor is, and that we are there to help if needed. Especially in the sometimes troublesome teenage years, it will be good to know that there is a friend to rely on, someone there who cares and who tells it like it is. Regular visits through many years can help to ensure that. Likewise, our adult family practice patients would do well not to underestimate the importance of regular checkups.

When you come in for preventive visits, it is a good idea to bring a list of questions. If you think of these questions before the visit, you might bring up issues that have been lurking below the surface and discuss them, and so the visit can actually become only one part of a longer, focused discussion. Through it all, we hope to become people you trust for advice and direction.

DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC MEDICINE

Prevention is important, but when you or your child is sick, there is nothing more important than diagnosing and treating that illness. Don't let anybody kid you, modern medicine is great. Just a few generations ago, very little could be done to help the sick. Today we can do so much.

Still, with our ever more powerful medicines, we feel there is great room for restraint. Viruses don't respond to antibiotics, so we are not going to throw antibiotics at them, we are going to wait to let the body cure itself. We are also going to try not to overuse lab tests and x-rays – there is still room for our clinical judgment. Our philosophy on referring our patients to specialists is this: when we are confident that we are doing everything that should be done, we will leave it at that. Anytime we feel our opinion is not the best and we need someone else's, we will refer you to that

specialist. If you ever feel you need a second opinion, let us know. We will not be offended – we know how precious your children are to you, and none of us thinks that we are omniscient.

HEALTH EDUCATION

One of our most important services to you is offering materials of health education on both sick and well topics. We have prepared lots of handouts available in the office and on-line at our website, www.baysidemed.com. We also have extensive links on our website to other sources of information. We invite you to check them out.

HOW WE DO IT

A generation ago physicians “helped” patients by ordering them to do things. “Give him carrots for three days, then try squash.” Since that time, however, society has become less authoritarian, and so have we. Most of the time we will really prefer to discuss things with you. It isn't that we don't have our opinions – we do. And in some cases we will be quite forceful – with serious illness we will insist on the proper treatment. But for most decisions there are choices to be made, and we feel that you will make the best choices. So, we will be there with you and try to help steer you in a general area, but we will not try to take away your freedom. You are the parents, or you are the patient, and the choice is really yours. Our advice is just that, advice. And remember: we are here to help you, not to judge you. So try to be open and honest with us, and we will try to be sensitive to your feelings, and worthy of your trust.

We do take our responsibility to be good, well-informed clinicians very seriously. We all worked hard in medical school, we have been well trained, and we keep up our continuing medical education religiously. Several of us have occupied leadership positions in the local pediatric community, and we

try to serve you as a responsible, well-functioning team. We each have our areas where we are particularly knowledgeable, and so we often consult with one another on cases. It is satisfying for us to practice this way, and it is better medicine for you.

The medical team, by the way, includes you. While we are trying the best we can to be good doctors, we ask you to be good patients. Work with us and talk with us as teammates. We welcome your contributions. If you think you know what the matter is with your child, tell us! If we are prescribing a medicine that you think you might be allergic to, speak up! If we are failing you in any way – rudeness in the office, difficulty in making appointments, whatever – let us know! Call us, your practitioners directly – we are not a bureaucracy, we want to serve you well. We can't fix it if we don't know it's broke. And then, don't forget, part of being a responsible patient is helping us out by following the policies of the office. (Also, it doesn't hurt to praise us when we do well!)

GENERAL PROCEDURES IN THE OFFICE

Now, let's get more specific. How does our office work? What do you need to do at Bayside?

Calling and Making Appointments

Sick Appointments: When your child is sick and probably has to be seen the same day, you have two options. In four of our offices, we have Early Bird drop-in time – in Oakland from 8:30 to 9:15, and in Alameda, Pinole and Walnut Creek from 9:00 to 9:30 – when you can bring your child in without an appointment and be seen before regular appointments begin. These visits are for simple, acute illnesses, not complex, chronic ones. They are for your convenience, to get the problem addressed early, and to leave the rest of the day for other things.

Our offices in Pleasanton, San Ramon, Livermore and Tracy do not have drop in hours

but do have early appointments reserved for sick patients. In fact, all of our offices have daily appointments reserved for sick patients.

To schedule an appointment for a sick patient, please call in the morning. The phones open at 7:30 in Livermore and Pleasanton; they open at 8:30 in the other Bayside offices. Of course, sick calls are welcome anytime, but the best choice of appointments will be early in the morning. We will normally be able to see a sick child on the day that you call. By the way, if one child already has an appointment and you need to bring a sibling to be seen, please call us first, so we can prepare for that child's visit.

Well Appointments: Always try to leave an office visit with an appointment for the next well visit in hand. If you can't make the appointment at that time, at least be certain when the next visit should be, so you will know what to ask for when you call. When you do call for a well appointment, it is best to call in the afternoon, when the phones are not so busy. Yearly physicals are best done in the spring and summer months. Try not to wait until the last minute for school physicals. For well visits of older children, since hearing, vision, and blood tests are often necessary, it is a good idea to arrive at least 15 minutes before the official appointment time.

Information Calls: We welcome your calls for advice. Again, these advice calls are best done after the morning's first hour, when acute calls generally come in. We want to be good sources of information to you, but on the other hand, we encourage you to use other sources besides ourselves. In other words, if possible, we urge you to look at a book or online before calling. If our staff cannot answer your question, they will pass the message on to a clinician, and we will call back as soon as we can.

While we want to handle what we can by telephone and not cause an unnecessary visit, we also want to be careful to render high-quality medicine. We will most often not be able to prescribe antibiotics over the telephone, for instance. Also, since rashes are hard enough to diagnose even when you see them, we will be reluctant to suggest remedies for rashes over the telephone.

Which clinician you see: When you call the office for an appointment, you will be asked with whom you wish to make the appointment, when, and in which office. It is up to you to choose. Most people seem to prefer to see one or two of us primarily, and this is fine with us. We do encourage you to meet all of us, however, so that in case of illness you need to deal with whoever is on call, you might be familiar with that doctor. But that is up to you. Some of you will like some of us better than others, and that is fine with us. We are all proud of each other's skills, and our feelings won't be hurt if you switch around.

Check-In Procedures

- When you arrive, please check-in at the registration window.
- We will submit all of your insurance claim forms through our computerized billing system. For this to work, we need up-to-date information from you each time you visit our office. Therefore, please have available for us:
 - Your copayment
 - Your insurance card
 - Any change in your current address, telephone number, your insurance coverage, and your employer information

Check-Out Procedures

- When you are leaving the office, please stop again at the front desk. The receptionist will make any follow-up or well-visit appointment you may need. If you need to pay us for the visit, please do so at this time.

Appointment Timing

- We try very hard to serve you in a timely fashion. Please don't be offended when we don't succeed. Sometimes we run late due to emergencies. We ask for your patience when this occurs.
- If you are late, we will try to serve you; but you may have to wait while we serve patients who came on time.
- Our family practice patients are all asked to arrive 15 minutes before the time of your appointment.

Missed Appointments

- If you must cancel an appointment, please do so at least 24 hours in advance. Please, please don't be a no-show! No-shows take away time that we could have used to serve another patient, of course. There is a missed appointment fee of \$35 if you do not provide a 24-hour notice.

Night and Weekend Coverage

On Saturday mornings two of our offices are open for sick visits for children:

- Our Oakland office is open on Saturday, 9:00-9:30 for drop-ins and 9:30-12:00 for appointments.
- Our Pleasanton office is open 8:00-12:00 for Saturday appointments.

We have full telephone coverage for illness and emergencies when our offices are closed. Calling our office answering machine will give you the number to call. The family practice clinicians have a rotation of physicians who take calls for emergencies. When calling about pediatric patients, you will usually speak to a nurse who is on telephone duty. If there is a need, the nurse may get in touch with our Bayside on-call doctor. Also, many of the insurance companies now offer emergency on-call advice lines – the telephone number for this service should be on your insurance card. There may be a charge for these after-hour telephone calls.

When you call, it is a good idea to have the following patient information available: temperature; weight and age; insurance plan; current medications and prescriptions; concise description of the problem; and any chronic conditions.

Using the Emergency Room

In the past when you were sick and you thought you needed to go to the emergency department at the hospital you went. Usually the insurance company paid for the visit, no questions asked. Nowadays with managed care, it is not so cut and dried. Usually they pay, but there can be a hassle if they think it was not a justified visit. On the other hand, if you call us first and are directed to go

there, the insurance will pay without question. Therefore, it's best to call first before you go to the ER. If you do go of your own volition, however, please don't call us afterwards for a retroactive authorization. This is something that we cannot do.

Dealing with Managed Care – Your HMO and IPA

Here is a short, practical introduction to managed care.

First, let's point out a possible source of confusion. The HMO is the parent company – HealthNet, Pacificare, Blue Shield HMO, etc. The HMO then contracts with an IPA – Hill Physicians, Alta Bates Medical Group, Muir Diablo Medical Group, and others. These IPAs then set the rules that we are talking about here.

HMO's cost less than PPO's. To achieve this lower price, the HMO has to take some steps to provide excellent care, but at a lower cost.

One thing the companies require is that you have a PCP, or Primary Care Practitioner. To be seen at Bayside, you need to make sure that your PCP is one of our Bayside clinicians. With the majority of insurance plans, you can see any of the Bayside clinicians if you are signed up with one of us. In a small minority of instances you may be restricted by your plan to seeing only that one clinician you selected, or to only the Bayside clinicians signed up with that plan. This is a rare instance and pertains only to a couple of the plans, but if that plan is yours, make sure you know who is covered for you and who isn't.

The managed care companies also have contracts with hospitals, laboratories and X-ray facilities. In exchange for giving these facilities their business, the IPAs get a lower price – which is part of the reason your insurance will cost you less. But this means that you, the patient, need to go only to the contracted hospital, lab or X-ray facility, or your bill will not be paid. It is your responsibility to know which facility is appropriate for your IPA. Our office will help you determine where you should go, but if somehow you wind up in the wrong place, the bill will be yours to pay, unfortunately.

IPAs also try to save money by making referrals

to specialists more appropriate. To do this, they require authorization for specialist visits, first by us in the primary care office, and then by their own IPA office.

Here is their reasoning. Primary care providers can treat the great majority of conditions, and we cost less than specialists. If IPAs can cut down on needless specialist visits, they can save money and improve the continuity of care with the PCP. So they make us think about each referral carefully.

Take the example of acne. You can imagine how many cases of acne we see in our office! Acne is such a common condition that we are well trained in residency how to treat it, we continually update our knowledge, and we see so many cases of it that we get used to treating it. Although many patients think they should see a dermatologist for acne, there is usually really no need. So, it makes sense for the IPA to insist that only difficult cases be seen by the dermatologist.

It should hardly need saying that we will absolutely not compromise a patient's care just to save the money of a referral. We will always give you the best care we can, and if a specialist is needed, we will be very active in ensuring that you go to the specialist you need. But at the same time, we will try to observe the rules of the IPA carefully, and review the need of a referral here at our level as we are asked to do.

So we ask you to understand the process we are going through. Please do not show up at our office in the morning, asking us to complete a referral to a specialist whom you have an appointment to see that afternoon, pending our authorization! Also please understand that if you have seen a specialist and he or she has said you should be checked in a year, you might be asked to get the checkup from us rather than from the specialist, if that is appropriate. Making sure referrals are appropriate is really in everybody's interest.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Nowadays, most of our medical bills involve health insurance, which can be very complicated. We realize this, and our goal is to make things as simple as possible for you. We also ask for your assistance to simplify our processes as well. Here are our policies:

1. Please bring your insurance card with you to every office visit. It is your responsibility to keep us informed of any changes in your insurance coverage.
2. Update your address, telephone and employer information with us whenever there is a change.
3. All copayments, deductibles, share of costs and coinsurances are due at the time of service. A billing fee of \$15 will be added to your balance if you do not make your payment at the time of service.
4. If you have no insurance, or if we are not able to verify your insurance eligibility, we ask you to pay at the time of service.
5. We cannot bill third-party insurance plans, such as automobile or liability insurances. You will be asked to pay for our services at the time of your visit.
6. If your insurance does not pay within 90 days, the balance on your account will become your responsibility, in accordance with our insurance contract.
7. If your insurance denies the claim or the procedure, the charges will become your responsibility.
8. If you have a workers' compensation case, you need to bring all insurance information with you to the visit. If your claim is denied, it will become your responsibility.
9. For your convenience, we accept Visa and MasterCard. This can help for you to pay your bill over time.
10. There is a \$35 missed appointment fee if you cancel or reschedule an appointment with less than 24 hours advance notice or if you fail to arrive for your appointment.
11. There is no charge for forms completed as part of an office visit. There will be a

charge for filling out forms based on your medical records when it is not done at the time of an appointment. Fees vary depending upon the form, including school forms, child care forms, immunization cards, disability forms, etc.

12. There will be a \$25 charge for copying materials from your chart including the transfer of records to another facility.
13. There is a \$25 banking fee for all returned checks. If your check is returned from the bank, we will not accept a check as payment on your account. Future payments must be made with cash, money order or credit card.
14. We are not responsible for delinquent accounts due to lack of receipt of statements or other correspondence. Notices are assumed to be acceptable if they are returned to us as unclaimed, forwarding order expired, or otherwise undeliverable.

NEWBORNS

Insurance coverage for newborns can be challenging, since the insurance companies often do not have the babies enrolled at the time you make your first office visits. Since they are not automatically informed that your baby has been born, it is up to you to call them and tell them.

Most insurances give you 30 days to sign up your newborn, but the earlier you call in, the better off you will be. Make sure you pick a Bayside clinician as your PCP so that he or she can be seen by us.

We will send our bills to the insurance company you give as your coverage. Even so, you may start receiving bills from us for our services at the hospital and in the office. Some of these bills will be for a deductible or coinsurance, which are your responsibility to pay. Other charges, however, will be sent to you because your insurance tells us that your child is not covered. This may happen because our claim arrived at the insurance company before they had updated their records to include your newborn.

If you start to receive statements from Bayside indicating that our claims have been denied, call your insurance company right away to straighten out the situation. Then call our business office and let us know what is happening. It is best to sort out confusion as quickly as possible. That way, you won't be worrying about your bills and neither will we.

Our goal at Bayside is to serve your medical needs as well as we possibly can; and we want to make the billing a non-issue right from the start.

BILLING PROBLEMS

The business of medicine can be rough. If you are having problems with billing, first call our billing office and speak with your account representative. If that is unsatisfactory, ask for the supervisor. Finally, if things are still not resolved, please ask to speak to our Administrator, Marc Blecher, at the same number. We are very committed to making sure you are dealt with personally, fairly and professionally.

Once again – welcome to Bayside!

OAKLAND

Mon-Fri 8:30-5:30
Sat 9:00-12:00
3100 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA 94609
Tel (510) 452-5231
Fax (510) 869-6679

ALAMEDA

Mon-Fri 9:00-5:30
1359 Park Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
Tel (510) 523-8162
Fax (510) 865-2532

LIVERMORE

Mon-Fri 8:30-5:00
1134 Murrieta Blvd.
Livermore, CA 94550
Tel (925) 449-7795
Fax (925) 449-7953

BERKELEY

Mon-Fri 9:00-5:30
2915 Telegraph Avenue
Suite 101
Berkeley, CA 94705
Tel (510) 843-4544
Fax (510) 843-3871

PINOLE

Mon-Fri 9:00-5:30
2160 Appian Way
Suite 100
Pinole, CA 94564
Tel (510) 724-8300
Fax (510) 724-8391

WALNUT CREEK

Mon-Fri 9:00-5:30
590 Ygnacio Valley Road
Suite 160
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Tel (925) 933-4383
Fax (925) 933-7023

PLEASANTON

Mon-Fri 9:00-5:30
Sat 9:00-11:30
5720 Stoneridge Mall Road
Suite 240
Pleasanton, CA 94588
Tel (925) 463-1234
Fax (925) 463-9599

SAN RAMON

Mon-Fri 9:00-5:30
5201 Norris Canyon Road
Suite 140
San Ramon, CA 94583
Tel (925) 277-7550
Fax (925) 277-7555

TRACY

Please call for appointment
652 West 11th Street
Suite 129
Tracy, CA 95376
Tel (209) 839-1432
Fax (209) 839-8681

**You can reach our business office:
Monday – Friday • 9:00 am – 5:00 pm • (925) 587-2500
Some of our offices have extended hours.**