



Mercado Foot & Ankle Center

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Mercado Foot & Ankle Center is required, by law, to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of your protected health information and to provide our patients with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information.

Disclosure of your Health Care Information

Treatment

We may disclose your health care information to other healthcare professionals within our practice for the purpose of treatment, payment or healthcare operations.

"On occasion, it may be necessary to seek consultation regarding your condition from other health care providers associated with Mercado Foot & Ankle Center."

"It is our policy to provide a substitute health care provider, authorized by Mercado Foot & Ankle Center, to provide assessment and/or treatment to our patients, without advanced notice, in the event of your primary health care provider's absence due to vacation, sickness, or other emergency situation."

Payment

We may disclose your health information to your insurance provider for the purpose of payment or health care operations.

If payment is not made as arranged, our office may utilize an outside collection agency, credit reporting agency or other means of collecting outstanding debt. Your file, containing protected health care information, may be reviewed by the designated collection agency or authority.

Workers' Compensation

If applicable, we may disclose your health information as necessary to comply with state Workers' Compensation Laws.

Emergencies

We may disclose your health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, or another person responsible for your care, about your medical condition or in the event of an emergency or of your death.

Public Health

As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health authorities for purposes related to: preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability; reporting child abuse or neglect; reporting domestic violence; reporting to the Food and Drug Administration problems with products and reactions to medications; and reporting disease or infection exposure.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings

We may disclose your health information in the course of any administrative or judicial proceeding.

Law Enforcement

We may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for purposes such as identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, complying with a court order or subpoena and other law enforcement purposes.

Deceased Persons

We may disclose your health information to coroners or medical examiners.

Organ Donation & Research

We may disclose your health information to organizations involved in procuring, banking or transplanting organs and tissues, or to researchers conducting research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board.

Public Safety

It may be necessary to disclose your health information to appropriate persons in order to prevent or lessen a serious or imminent threat to the health or safety of a particular person or to the general public.

Specialized Government Agencies

We may disclose your health information for military, national security, prisoner and government benefits purposes.

Marketing and Other Communications

We may contact you for marketing purposes or fundraising purposes, as described below:

“As a courtesy to our patients, it is our policy to call your home the day prior to your scheduled appointment to remind you of your appointment time. If you are not at home, we leave a reminder message on your answering machine or with the person answering the phone. No protected health information will be disclosed during this call other than the date and time of your scheduled appointment and a request to call our office if you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment.”

“It is our practice to occasionally participate in charitable events. During these times, we may send you a letter, post card, invitation or call your home to invite you to participate in the charitable activity. We will inform you of the type of activity, the dates and times, and request your participation in such event. It is not our policy to disclose health information about you for the purpose of Mercado Foot & Ankle Center sponsored fund-raising events.”

Change of Ownership

In the event that Mercado Foot & Ankle Center is sold or merged with another organization, your health information/record will become property of the new owner.

Your Health Information Right

- You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. Please be advised, however, that Mercado Foot & Ankle Center is not required to agree to the restriction that you requested.
- You have the right to have your health information received or communicated through an alternative method or sent to an alternative location other than the usual method of communication or delivery, upon your request.
- You have the right to inspect and copy your health information.
- You have the right to request that Mercado Foot & Ankle Center amend your protected health information. Please be advised, however, that Mercado Foot & Ankle Center is not required to agree to amend your protected health information. If your request to amend your health information has been denied, you will be provided with an explanation of our denial reason(s) and information about how you can disagree with the denial.
- You have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your protected health information made by Mercado Foot & Ankle Center.
- You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time upon your request.

Changes in this Notice of Privacy Practices

Mercado Foot & Ankle Center reserves the right to amend this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time in the future, and will make new provisions effective for all information that it maintains. Until such amendment is made, Mercado Foot & Ankle Center is required by law to comply with this Notice.

Mercado Foot & Ankle Center is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. If you have questions about any part of this notice, or if you want more information about your privacy rights, please contact: Kathleen Mercado by calling 630-922-7722. If Kathy is not available, you may make an appointment for a personal conference in person or by telephone within two (2) working days.

Complaints

Complaints about your privacy rights, or how Mercado Foot & Ankle Center has handled your health information should be directed to Kathleen Mercado by calling 630-922-7722. If Kathy is not available, you may make an appointment for a personal conference in person or by telephone within two (2) working days.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this office handles your complaint, you may submit a formal complaint to:

DHHS, Office of Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 509F HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201

This notice is effective as of September 1, 2008.