

# Patient Information Guide

Compassionate care,  
advanced medicine,  
close to home.



**NORTHBAY™**  
*Center for Primary Care*

# Welcome

*At the NorthBay Center for Primary Care we work hard to provide you with high quality, personalized care that respects your time and needs. This packet includes information about our practice, what you can expect from your physician and our staff, and ways you can help us provide you with the best care possible. If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to ask your physician or any member of our staff.*

*Physicians who care for patients at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care are independent practitioners, as required by California law. Although the physicians are not our employees, we are proud they have chosen the Center for Primary Care as a place to practice.*



NORTHBAY™

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Center for Primary Care

## “The Doctor Can See You Today”

The NorthBay Center for Primary Care is proud to offer our patients the “Open Access” appointment system.

We respect your relationships with your physicians and value your time as well. This is why when you call us for an appointment by 2 p.m. each day, you will be offered an appointment or call back that same day.

When you see your physician for routine medical care and a follow-up appointment is needed, you will be given a call back card with a return date. On this date, simply call our office and receive a convenient appointment time for that day. Our phone lines are available until 5:30 p.m. daily to assist you. Our goal is that you, as our patient, will be able to schedule appointments on a same-day basis when you need them.

Please feel free to talk to any of our staff members or your physician if you have any questions regarding our “Open Access” appointment system. Comment Cards are always available at the registration desk as well. Please let us know how we are doing and how we may better serve you.

## Your Physician: Part of a Team

### *What if my doctor isn't available?*

Here at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care the doctors work together in teams. If for some reason you are not able to see your primary care doctor on the days you need care, we will make an appointment for you with one of your doctor's team members.

That doctor works closely with your primary doctor and will review your visit with him or her. This team approach ensures that your doctor is always aware of your health needs and the care provided to you.



## Laboratory and Other Test Results

Please allow about one week for us to receive the results of any laboratory tests or other tests we have ordered for you.

<i>If your results are normal</i>	<i>If your results are abnormal</i>
The way you will be notified about normal test results can vary, depending on the test you receive and your particular health circumstance. Your doctor will talk to you about how you will be notified.	Your doctor or a member of his or her staff will call you to discuss your results and the next steps in your care.

## Medication Refills

Your pharmacy will manage all of your medication refill needs. Even if your bottle shows no refills, please contact your pharmacy and they will call us or fax us with a request. Contacting your pharmacy when you need a refill will provide you with the quickest service possible.

Please plan to call your pharmacy before you run out of your medicine. This is very important because refills often take a couple of days to process after your call.

### *Written Prescriptions*

During this call we will need information on all the medications you take, including the names of the medications, strength, how you take them and the amount you take.

If you use a mail-in prescription service, please allow plenty of time (up to two weeks) to request the written prescription, mail it in, and receive your medication.



*If you need a written prescription, please call us at your physician's office.*

Vacaville: (707) 624-7500

Green Valley: (707) 646-3500

Fairfield – Hilborn: (707) 646-5500

*If you or your pharmacist needs to fax us information, our fax numbers are:*

Vacaville: (707) 624-7501

Green Valley: (707) 646-3501

Fairfield – Hilborn: (707) 646-5501

## After-Hours Care

### *For an Emergency*

If you experience a life-threatening emergency at any time, always call 911 or seek care at the nearest hospital emergency room.

### *For an Urgent Problem*

Urgent Care clinics are located in Fairfield and Vacaville to accommodate the after-hour needs of NorthBay Center for Primary Care patients.

Because many problems can be solved with a phone consultation, we recommend that you call your regular physician first. You will be transferred to the hospital operator who will connect you to the physician on-call.

If an urgent care visit is needed, please contact one of the offices listed at right. The cost or co-pay of your visit depends on your insurance coverage. All ongoing primary care and urgent care follow-up should be sought from your own primary care physician.

### **Vacaville Urgent Care**

1001 Nut Tree Road, Suite 220  
6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Mon. – Fri.  
Noon to 4 p.m. on weekends  
Appointments and walk-in  
patients accepted  
(707) 455-1343

### **Solano After-Hours Clinic**

1620 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite C, FF  
5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Mon. – Fri.  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekends  
Appointments are required  
(707) 428-3978



## Referrals to Specialists

Occasionally your doctor may need to refer you to a physician specialist, a hospital or other medical service for treatment. The Center for Primary care network includes more local specialists than any other group in Solano County. The following tips will help your referral go as smoothly as possible.

*If you have questions about a specialty referral, please contact our Referral Representative between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.  
The phone number is:  
(707) 646-7507*

- Please allow seven to 10 days for the referral request to be processed. This time is often needed to verify your health plan's requirements for referral to other physicians or services.
- The Referral Representative at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care will call you when your insurance coverage has been verified and the appointment for services has been made, or to let you know that the specialist's office will call you to set up an appointment.
- Please let our staff know if you prefer certain days or times for scheduling the appointment with the specialist or other health care facility.

## If You Need Hospital Care

The physicians who practice at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care admit their patients to NorthBay Medical Center in Fairfield and NorthBay VacaValley Hospital in Vacaville, except for the rare instance when a level of care is needed that is not available at these hospitals. While in the hospital, your care may be supervised by a hospitalist, a physician who specializes in caring for hospitalized patients.

Because hospitalists have extensive experience in caring for patients in the hospital and spend all of their time inside the hospital, the benefits to patients are numerous. This approach not only helps prevent medical complications, but also often results in reduced hospital stays and lower costs.

Your NorthBay Center for Primary Care physician works closely with the hospitalists regarding each patient's care. He or she will receive an update from the hospitalist when you are discharged so that your transition out of the hospital will go smoothly.

## Preparing for Your Appointment

Honoring your appointment time is important to us at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care. You can help by taking a few simple steps to prepare for your visit. We ask that you please:

1. Bring a list of the medications you take with you to your appointment, including information about the strength of the medication and how often you take it. Please also include any vitamins or herbal remedies you might be taking.
2. Bring your insurance card or any updated insurance information.
3. Be prepared to pay your co-payment or for any services not covered by your health plan.
4. Arrive 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment time to complete any necessary paperwork.

## How Do I Cancel My Appointment?

If you need to cancel your appointment with the NorthBay Center for Primary Care, please call our 24-hour cancellation voicemail line to leave a message.

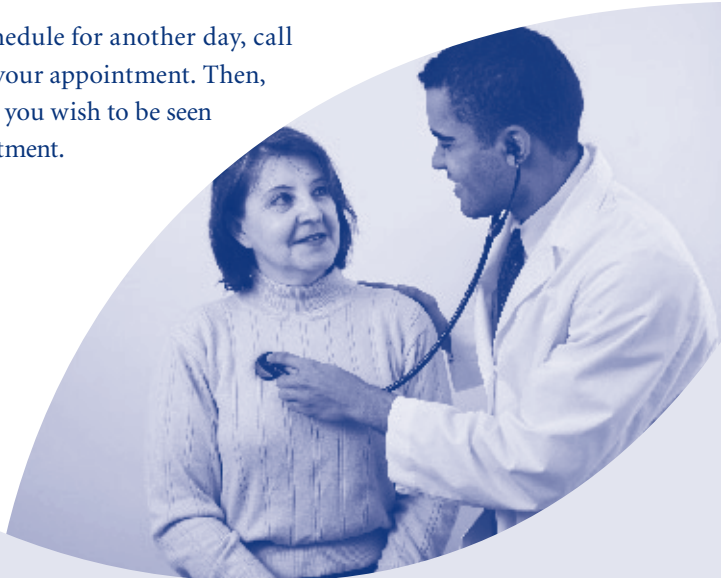
If you wish to cancel and reschedule for another day, call the cancellation line to cancel your appointment. Then, simply call the morning or day you wish to be seen by your doctor for a new appointment.

### *Cancellation Lines:*

**Vacaville:** (707) 624-7505

**Green Valley:** (707) 646-3505

**Fairfield – Hilborn:** (707) 646-5505



## Are You in Pain?

At the NorthBay Center for Primary Care, controlling your pain is very important to us. Every visit you will be asked the question, “Are you having any pain today?” If you are in pain, the following pain scale will help us understand your particular situation and what we can do to help.

1. With zero meaning no pain and 10 being the worst pain you’ve ever experienced, how would you rate your pain today?
2. Using the same scale, describe what you would consider to be an acceptable or tolerable level of pain. We will then work with you to manage your pain with the goal of achieving a level of comfort acceptable to you.

3. Please describe the type of pain you are experiencing. The following words might help with your description:

Ache	Crushing	Radiating	Tightness
Burning	Dull	Sharp	Throbbing
Cramping	Pressure	Stabbing	

4. How long have you had this pain?

Days?	Weeks?	Months?	Years?
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5. How often does this pain bother you?

Sometimes?	Comes and goes?
Constantly?	Only with certain movements or activities?

## Important Information About Your Bill

The following questions and answers about your NorthBay Center for Primary Care billing statement will provide you with important information about the format of our bills. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

### *What is the “facility fee” and why is it listed on my bill?*

Most of you are accustomed to receiving a bill from your doctor that includes the care your doctor provides and the other services you need as one office visit fee. Your NorthBay Center for Primary Care bill includes a “physician fee” and a “facility fee.” This is because we are a hospital-based medical practice, and the physician portion of the care you receive and the office portion (nurses, technicians and medical supplies) must be listed separately. The care your physician provides you is the “physician fee” portion of the bill and the “facility fee” portion is for the equipment, supplies and other personnel your physician uses to care for you.

### *Do I pay more to receive care at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care?*

Most of our patients have a health plan with pre-arranged rates with us, so the charges for the services you receive do not necessarily reflect what the NorthBay Center for Primary Care is paid for the care provided you. In this case, your out-of-pocket cost is based on your plan's negotiated rate, not on the billed charges.

In addition, many of our patients are part of a managed care plan where they are only responsible for the co-pay. So receiving care at the NorthBay Center for Primary Care does not cost more out-of-pocket. This may not be clear on the “explanation of benefits” from your insurance company.



### *How does this affect me if I'm covered by Medicare?*

If you have Medicare Part B coverage as your primary insurance, you will pay your co-insurance portion for the facility fee plus the co-insurance or co-payment you have to pay for physician services. Paying both co-payments is an additional out-of-pocket expense for you if Medicare Part B coverage is your primary insurance.

However, if you are also covered by supplemental insurance (such as Blue Cross or AARP), the plan should fully cover any co-payments. Patients covered by an Advantage plan pay the normal co-payment set by the plan for doctor's office visits.

*Who do I call if I have other questions?*

*If you have further questions about your bill, please call our billing office at:*

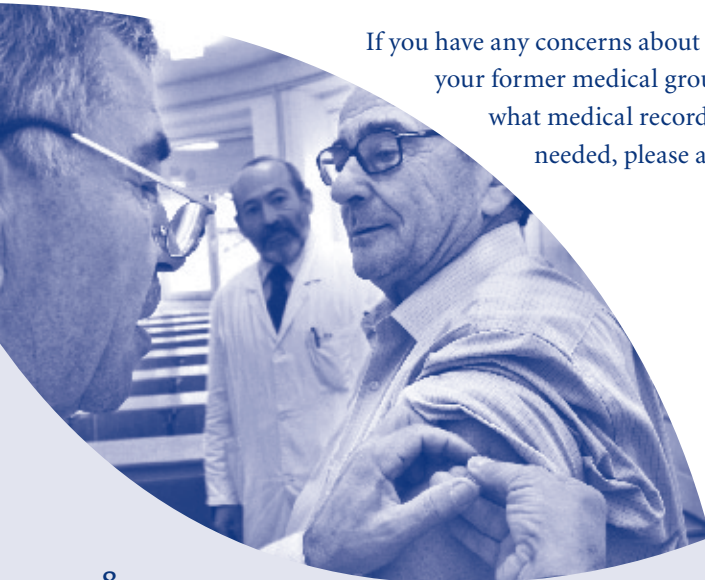
*(800) 727-5662*

## **Important Information About Medical Record Transfers**

Your physician may request your medical records from the former physician who cared for you. This will help your new physician provide you with the best care possible.

Please be aware that some medical groups charge patients to send a copy of these records. The NorthBay Center for Primary Care does not charge for record transfer because we believe this information is vital to continued care of the patient. However, other groups have made the business decision to charge a fee for this service and you may receive a bill from them. This bill is not from the NorthBay Center for Primary Care.

If you have any concerns about these charges, please contact your former medical group. If you have questions about what medical records are needed, or why they are needed, please ask any member of our staff.



## **Advance Directives**

Regardless of your age or health situation, our staff may ask you if you have an Advance Health Care Directive. This document protects your right to specify your wishes in choosing or refusing medical treatment if you become unable to do so. Educational materials and forms about advance directives are available from any NorthBay Center for Primary Care staff member.

Discussing your concerns with your physician will help clarify your wishes. Additional assistance is available from the NorthBay Medical Center or NorthBay VacaValley Hospital department of social services, if you would like help reviewing the Advance Directive forms or process.

## **Your Privacy is Important**

On April 14, 2003, new federal regulations to protect medical privacy went into effect. The law, known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) gives patients greater control over their personal health information and who can view this information. Healthcare providers such as the NorthBay Center for Primary Care have adopted policies to meet the HIPAA regulations and safeguard the privacy of your health information.

Prior to your first appointment, our staff will provide you with additional information on our privacy policy and your rights under HIPAA.

*Thank you for choosing*  
**the NorthBay Center  
for Primary Care.**



**NORTHBAY™**

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*Center for Primary Care*

**Vacaville**

421 Nut Tree Road  
Vacaville, CA 95687  
(707) 624-7500

**Green Valley**

5140 Business Center Drive, Suite 200  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
(707) 646-3500

**Fairfield**

2458 Hilborn Road  
Fairfield, CA 94534  
(707) 646-5500