

## Prescription Policy

### Medication Management

The primary goal of medication management is to have a mutually agreed upon treatment plan that produces benefits that outweigh any side effects/harms. You will never be asked to start or maintain a medication if the harms and risks outweigh the potential or actual benefits.

There may be times when consensus can't be reached on the risk/benefit ratio, and if Dr. Toups believes it is unsafe for you to continue without medication, or without changing medication, as part of your treatment plan, you may be referred to other care.

#### **If medication is part of your treatment plan we ask you to:**

- 1) Take your medication as instructed.
- 2) Communicate about any problems that might be related to medication, and let us know if you start, stop, or change medications prescribed by other providers or purchased over the counter.
- 3) Barring emergencies, contact the office before making any unplanned changes to your medication. Doing this confuses your treatment plan and may be dangerous.

### Refills

- 1) **Make requests via the patient portal.** Always let us know directly even if your pharmacy says they will contact us.
- 2) **Give us *at least 2 full business days to take care of a request. Do not wait until you are on your last day of medication.***
- 3) If you have missed an appointment, we may not provide a refill until you have *scheduled* an appointment, and may then only provide medication to last until we can see you for a visit.

### Controlled substances

Dr. Toups does prescribe controlled substances, subject to federal, state and local regulation. **In compliance with Texas law, we will check your record of controlled substance prescriptions upon each prescription of a benzodiazepine,** and we typically also check it for other controlled substances. This means we can see each prescription, when it was written, by whom, and when it was filled.

1. **Dr. Toups doesn't prescribe *scheduled (that is daily or greater than daily) benzodiazepines*** such as Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, etc. In some circumstances they are prescribed as needed.
  - a. You must attend appointments to receive refills.

- b. If you are a new patient already on scheduled benzos, you should be willing to taper these medications over a period of months.
  - c. If you take as needed medication more often than agreed upon in your treatment plan and your prescription doesn't last the expected interval, you will not receive extra medication. Instead you will receive recommendations for managing any withdrawal symptoms in a safe manner.
2. Dr. Toups **does prescribe stimulants** such as Adderall and Ritalin.
- a. Under federal law, there are no automatic refills for these drugs, and you can expect to attend an appointment for a refill for approximately the first 6 months. Well established patients may receive refills between appointments.
  - b. Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you can receive prescriptions for stimulant medication via telemedicine. Prior to the pandemic an in person visit was necessary to initiate such prescriptions, and may become necessary in the future.
  - c. If you take your stimulant more often than agreed upon in your treatment plan and your prescription doesn't last the expected interval, you will not receive extra medication. Instead you will receive recommendations for managing any withdrawal symptoms in a safe manner.
3. Dr. Toups **does not prescribe opioids**; it is outside her scope of practice. Dr. Toups is not certified to prescribe buprenorphine for opiate use disorders.

## Pharmacies and Medication Approvals

You are **responsible for understanding your prescription coverage**, paying copays, and communicating with your pharmacy.

Beware automatic refills - **when you pick up medication be sure the type, dose, and schedule matches your current treatment plan.**

**Always communicate with us directly** about prescription issues and refills.

If there is a problem, before contacting us:

- 1) Be sure the pharmacist is looking at all available prescriptions for you, not just refills of existing prescriptions. Frequently, pharmacies will continue to request refills of an existing rx number (and tell you there is no prescription available) when there is a *new* prescription available.
- 2) **To greatly speed up resolution of problems, ask why your pharmacy claim was denied.** Common reasons include:
  - a) A prior authorization is required. Ask the pharmacist to initiate one, and tell the office to look out for it.
  - b) Your insurance will not release a prescription because it is too early. Sometimes we can request an early fill, let us know.
  - c) Your insurance has rules about how that medication can be filled - only through mail order, only in a 90 day supply, etc. We have no access to

plan rules and can't fix these issues without information from your pharmacy.

Often there is little our office can do to resolve problems with a prescription, or resolution takes several days. Be proactive, never assume that we know of a problem, and make sure you request refills with enough time to handle any issues without an interruption of your treatment.