

our office welcome letter
EDWARD M. GABER MD
231 ST. ANN DR. STE 2
MANDEVILLE, LA 70471
(985) 871-5420 OFFICE
(985) 624-5490 FAX
(504) 668-7716 BEEPER

The Metairie/Mandeville Institute is the internal medicine practice of Edward M. Gaber MD. Dr. Gaber is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and has interests in Nutrition and Preventive Health. He graduated Tulane Medical School in 1969 and then did his one year Internship and three-year Medical Residency at Charity Hospital in New Orleans. He was a Major in the US Air Force from 1973 to 1975 and functioned for two years as an Internal Medicine and Emergency Room doctor for 20,000 active-duty and retired Air Force personnel. He then started his practice in Metairie, Louisiana in 1975. He is a National Honor Society graduate of the Boston Latin School and Tufts University and is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Tulane Medical School.

At the Metairie/Mandeville Institute, we will keep you healthy with regular checkups, encouragement of exercise, good nutrition, and life goals that will keep you at peak energy levels. We believe in taking the time to be thorough and careful. Therefore, all new patients get at least one and one-half hours and all routine revisits are at least 30 minutes. When you choose us for your primary care, we ask for a firm commitment to try to follow our directions, take your medications as prescribed, and let us know what is happening to you if you see any other specialists. If you wish to change your medication, we are most often willing to accommodate you, however, you must let us know before you stop, raise, or lower your medication. This is VERY IMPORTANT and that is why it is in our first point of information.

Dr. Gaber is an Internal Medicine "Specialist" and a solo practitioner and will be "on call" for you every night, seven nights a week. Please call us during the day as soon as you know you are sick, so we can fit you in during the day. After hours, do not hesitate to call us if you get sick, especially if you have fever over 102, shaking chills, faintness, pain, any chest discomfort, altered mental state, arm or leg weakness or numbness or lack of coordination, shortness of breath, vomiting, bleeding, or rash. Please be considerate and do not call us after hours with non-urgent matters. Dr Gaber takes calls on his beeper from after office hours until 11PM. After that time until 7AM, if you have an urgent problem, go directly to an Emergency Room. The ER doctor will examine you and call Dr Gaber afterwards if there is a problem he needs help with or if you need admission. Always err on the side of caution and go to the Emergency Room if you are sick. Also, never try to convince yourself that upper stomach or chest pain is "not my heart." Call the Office Number 985-871-5420 from 8:30AM to 4:30PM. Call the Beeper Number 504-668-7716 from 7AM to 8:30AM and from 4:30PM to 11PM. Dr Gaber says, "Do not hesitate to call me on nights or weekends or holidays. I'm happy to take your call if you are sick or in pain. It helps me also when I am able to treat your illness early on so I can keep you out of the hospital."

NEW PATIENTS

We ask that all new patients provide us with demographic information upon arrival. If Dr. Gaber is a provider for your managed care insurance, we will need a copy of your insurance card and

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your driver's license for all necessary information. We verify all insurance policies. If you are a minor covered under your parent's insurance plan, we will need your parent's social security number.

SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS

The office staff is available to make appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. When scheduling an appointment, please inform the office of any new address or insurance information when you make your appointment.

APPOINTMENT POLICY

Please understand that we will do everything we can to accommodate you with an appointment. Please try to make your revisit appointment as you leave the office as you may not be able to get the appointment time you need if you wait too long to make the appointment. If you wish to cancel a scheduled appointment, we ask that you contact us within 24 hours of that appointment. If you are over 20 minutes late for your scheduled appointment, we must ask that you reschedule as it is not fair to the rest of the patients that day, all of whom will now to have wait those extra 20 minutes to be seen. We do our best to accommodate all our patients; however, it may be necessary to reschedule appointments because Dr. Gaber has to go to the emergency room or for other unforeseen reasons.

HOSPITAL POLICY

There are times that you may have to be admitted to the hospital. If you are, Dr. Gaber will see you that day or that evening. If the sub-specialist admits you and if Dr. Gaber is consulted, he will also see you soon. If you are a patient or family member of a patient in the hospital and something is not right with the service you are getting there, pick up the phone and call Dr. Gaber immediately and tell him about it.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

Most routine prescriptions may be refilled by calling your pharmacy. The pharmacy then faxes or calls the physician and Dr. Gaber refills the prescription that day or at least by the next morning. If we have not seen you in the time period it was suggested that you revisit, we may ask you to make an appointment to be evaluated before your medication can be refilled. The decision as to whether or not a medication is refilled will be at the doctor's discretion only, as our nurses do not refill prescriptions. Also, if you have not obtained tests or blood tests that were suggested during your last visit, Dr. Gaber may not be able to refill your prescription because of medical/legal issues. Our policy is to refill prescriptions during regular office hours only. No refills will be made after office hours or on weekends unless it is a dire emergency.

LABORATORY AND RADIOLOGY RESULTS

We have found it difficult to keep up with posting results on our website on the hundreds of tests that come back. We will call only the abnormal results to you either immediately when we get them or within the week if they are not urgent problems. You can call us if you are very curious about the results and we will fax you a copy if you wish. Please understand that, as a solo practitioner, I cannot afford the extra employee we would need who would be dedicated to entering lab results. Rarely Xray departments or Quest Lab will not sent me a report. This is

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rare are will be picked up by our usual close followup - so don't miss appointments when requested. Also, don't hesitate to call if you don't feel well or your symptoms are not improving. We will be calling you when your test results require action on your part. It is extremely important that you take our advice to do blood tests and x-rays very seriously and do these tests exactly when you were told to do them. Our medications are extremely safe if monitored closely and if you do not allow us to monitor you as suggested, then grave consequences can result. Also, when you say you will do a test and then you do not get the test, believe it or not, this gives us medical/legal liability as we in fact have a legal obligation to remind you to do the test. Since we order 1,200 tests a week, we have no way of doing these reminders effectively. This means that if you say you will do a test and then you do not get the test, we will have to discharge you from our care. So tell us up front that you are not going to do the test and that relieves you and us from any medical/legal responsibility. This rule goes for the medication prescribed, which you agreed to take. If you stop, increase, or decrease the medication without notifying us, you will be notified that we cannot treat you any longer. These are firm rules that cannot be broken. Please tell us if any other physician has changed your medication or given you any new medication as we are more aware of your entire medical situation than anyone else. Please do not rely on emergency room doctors or any sub-specialist's reassurance that there will be no drug interactions. Drug interactions are often very complicated, esoteric, and often not well known. Dr. Gaber lectures on drug interactions and will be very careful not to prescribe any drugs that interact.

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Regarding Medicare, Dr. Gaber does accept Medicare assignments for Medicare. We will bill Medicare for all services you receive. You will be responsible for your deductible and 20% of your Medicare approved charge. You will also be responsible for any services requested or rendered that are not reimbursed by Medicare. If you have supplemental coverage, we will submit your balance to them after Medicare benefits are paid. Please note that Medicare does not pay for everything. There will be times when Dr. Gaber will order a test or laboratory test that Medicare does not deem necessary, but Dr. Gaber does. You will have a choice in doing the test, but you will need to sign a waiver stating you understand that Medicare might not pay for that test ordered and that you will be responsible for the price of the test. You will be notified ahead of time so that you can make that choice. As for managed care plans, if Dr. Gaber is a provider for your managed care plan, we will submit your claim to your insurance company. You will be responsible for any copayment or deductibles at the time of your visit. As for HMO's, the patient will be responsible for obtaining a referral from their primary care physician, Dr. Gaber, if their policy requires it. Please do not expect the doctor's office to make phone calls and request referrals the day of your visit to these other doctors. You must get the referral prior to the day of your visit to the specialist.

BILLING

Payment, not covered by insurance, is expected at the time of service. We accept cash, personal

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checks, and major credit cards. We will provide you with a receipt, which you may file to your insurance carrier. We will bill all PPOs and HMOs with which we have contracts. Please do not ask the office to bill an insurance carrier, with whom we do not have an agreement. This is your responsibility. All managed care policyholders are responsible for the appropriate copayment or deductible and any services requested or rendered that are not reimbursed by their plan at the time of service. Please note that your managed care plan does not cover everything. The office does not know everything your plan covers. This is the patient's responsibility.

PHONE NUMBERS

During office hours, we can be reached at (985)871-5420. After office hours, call our beeper number at (504)668-7716. Our fax number is (985)624-5490.

OFFICE HOURS

Our office is located at 231 St Ann Dr. Mandeville, LA 70471. Office hours are from 8:30AM to 5PM Monday through Saturday.

WEB SITE:

Please visit our web site at METAIRIEINSTITUTE.ORG for information on staying well, high blood pressure, diabetes, reflux esophagitis, vitamins, herbs, cholesterol, and the latest medical news.

Welcome to our practice,

Edward M. Gaber, M.D.

Our practice is committed to providing quality health care. It is our pledge to provide this care with respect and dignity. In keeping this pledge and commitment, we present the following Patient Rights and Responsibilities.

You have the right to:

- A personal clinician who will see you on an on-going, regular basis.
- Competent, considerate and respectful health care, regardless of race, creed, age, sex or sexual orientation.
- A second medical opinion from the clinician of your choice, at your expense.
- A complete, easily understandable explanation of your condition, treatment and chances for recovery.
- The personal review of your own medical records by appointment and in accordance with applicable State and Federal guidelines.
- Confidential management of communication and records pertaining to your medical care.
- Information about the medical consequences of exercising your right to refuse treatment.
- The information necessary to make an informed decision about any treatment or procedure, except as limited in an emergency situation.
- Be free from mental, physical and sexual abuse.
- Humane treatment in the least restrictive manner appropriate for treatment needs.
- An individualized treatment plan.
- Have your pain evaluated and managed.
- Refuse to participate as a subject in research.
- An explanation of your medical bill regardless of your insurance and the opportunity to personally examine your bill.
- The expectation that we will take reasonable steps to overcome cultural or other communication barriers that may exist between you and the staff.
- The opportunity to file a complaint should a dispute arise regarding care, treatment or service or to select a different clinician.

You are responsible for:

- Knowing your health care clinician's name and title.
- Giving your clinician correct and complete health history information, e.g. allergies, past and present illnesses, medications and hospitalizations.
- Providing staff with correct and complete name, address, telephone and emergency contact information each time you see your clinician so we can reach you in the event of a schedule change or to give medical instructions.
- Providing staff with current and complete insurance information, including any secondary insurance, each time you see your clinician.
- Signing a "Release of Information" form when asked so your clinician can get medical records from other clinicians involved in your care.
- Telling your clinician about all prescription medication(s) alternative, i.e. herbal or other, therapies, or over-the-counter medications you take. If possible, bring the bottles to your appointment.
- Telling your clinician about any changes in your condition or reactions to medications or treatment.
- Asking your clinician questions when you do not understand your illness, treatment plan or medication instructions.
- Following your clinician's advice. If you refuse treatment or refuse to follow instructions given by your health care clinician, you are responsible for any medical consequences.
- Keeping your appointments. If you must cancel your appointment, please call the health center at least 24 hours in advance.
- Paying copayments at the time of the visit or other bills upon receipt.
- Following the office's rules about patient conduct; for example, there is no smoking in our office.
- Respecting the rights and property of our staff and other persons in the office.