

# Patient Email Communication Consent Policy

## OUR COMMITMENT TO PRIVACY

Tri-City Orthopaedics will not share your email with third parties for marketing purposes, nor will we sell or use your opt-in contact information for any other purposes.

## RISKS OF USING EMAIL

1. The privacy and security of email communication cannot be guaranteed.
2. Employers and online services may have a legal right to inspect and retain emails.
3. Email is easier to falsify than handwritten or signed hard copies, and it is impossible to verify the true identity of the sender or to ensure that only the intended recipient can read an email once sent.
4. Emails can introduce viruses into a computer system and potentially damage or disrupt it.
5. Email can be forwarded, intercepted, circulated, stored, or altered without the knowledge or permission of TCO or the patient. Misaddressed emails may go to unintended and unknown recipients.
6. Email is indelible—backup copies may exist even after deletion by sender and recipient.
7. Use of email to discuss sensitive information can increase the risk of unauthorized disclosure.
8. Email can be used as evidence in court.

## CONDITIONS OF USING EMAIL

1. Whenever possible, TCO will send encrypted emails. However, any email communication initiated by the patient to TCO will be sent unencrypted, and by doing so the patient accepts the risks of transmitting unencrypted protected health information (PHI).
2. As an alternative to unencrypted email, the patient may communicate securely via the online chat/messaging feature or through the Patient Portal at <https://tcortho.com>. All communication sent via those platforms is encrypted and secure.
3. Emails to or from the patient concerning diagnosis or treatment may be printed in full and made part of the patient's medical record. Other individuals authorized to access the medical record, such as staff and billing personnel, will have access to those emails.
4. Although TCO will endeavor to read and respond promptly to patient emails, TCO cannot guarantee that any particular email will be read or responded to within any specific time frame. Patients should not use email for medical emergencies or other time-sensitive matters.
5. Patients should not use email for communication regarding especially sensitive information (for example, sexually transmitted disease, HIV/AIDS, mental health, developmental disability, or substance abuse). TCO will not discuss these matters via email.
6. TCO is not responsible for information loss due to technical failures associated with the patient's email software or Internet service provider.



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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION BY EMAIL

1. Limit or avoid using an employer's or other third party's computer.
2. Inform TCO of any changes in the patient's email address.
3. Take precautions to preserve the confidentiality of emails, such as using screen savers and safeguarding computer passwords.
4. Withdraw consent only by email or written communication to TCO.

## PATIENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I understand the risks associated with email communication between TCO and me, and I consent to the conditions outlined above as well as any additional instructions that TCO may impose. I understand TCO's right to withdraw the option of communicating through email or automated messaging upon written notice. Any questions I had were answered to my satisfaction.

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Signature

Today's Date

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Printed Name

DOB

For any questions or to exercise your data rights, please contact us at:

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