



# Secure E-mail Agreement

Greg T. Garrison, M.D.  
Jill A. Johnston, M.D.  
Kevin M. Ponciroli, M.D.  
Ginny Minnigerode, C.P.N.P.

## E-mail us at [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com)

In our continuing effort to better serve our patients and their families, we have set up an e-mail address through which you may communicate your child's protected health information with our office. It is your right to be informed about the risks of communicating via e-mail with your child's healthcare provider and about how we plan to use our secure e-mail service to maximize your child's medical management while maintaining his or her privacy as mandated by the American Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

### Definitions for this Agreement

**User:** any parent/guardian or other person given access to the e-mail address listed in this Agreement.

**Protected Health Information (PHI):** information, including demographic information that may identify the patient, that relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health of an individual.

### What types of communication should be sent via e-mail?

#### Subjects appropriate for e-mail

- Prescription refills
- Lab results
- Referral requests
- Billing questions
- Requests to have forms or immunization records completed
- Non-urgent, chronic disease management questions

#### Subjects that will not be discussed through e-mail

Sensitive materials such as:

- HIV-related issues
- Other sexually transmitted diseases
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues

(These topics should be discussed with your child's physician in person.)

### What are the benefits of using e-mail?

E-mail allows quick and detailed communication with our office for non-urgent matters.

E-mail allows retention and clarification of advice provided in clinic.

E-mail is useful for information you would have to commit to writing if it were given to you orally.

### What are the risks of using e-mail?

E-mail is not appropriate for urgent matters or emergency situations. E-mail, by its very nature, is a delayed communication. Our e-mail is not accessed and read continuously (see "Office policies regarding e-mail" on page 2). We cannot guarantee that any particular e-mail will be read and responded to within any particular period of time.

E-mail is sent at the touch of a button. Once sent, an e-mail message cannot be recalled or cancelled. Errors in transmission, regardless of the sender's caution, can occur.

### What are the benefits of the secure e-mail service known as SecureSend used by St. Clair Pediatrics?

To comply with the guidelines regarding patient and medical records privacy set forth by HIPAA, we have engaged a third-party provider to manage our secure e-mail system: Lux Scientiae (for more information on the company, please visit [www.LuxSci.com](http://www.LuxSci.com)). The company uses HIPAA-compliant encrypting technology (SecureSend) to ensure security of messages sent using its system. To access these messages, the User will be required to enter two passwords. The first is a User-specific password created by each User during the on-line registration of his/her e-mail address. The second is a randomly-generated password included in each e-mail. This ensures that only the person registering a valid e-mail address has access to a child's PHI. Everyone may use this service regardless of the type of e-mail program they have (i.e., Outlook Express, Internet Explorer, etc.). Message links embedded in the body of each e-mail direct you to a secure internet website. NOTE: You **do** need internet access to view secure e-mail messages.

In general, e-mail can be circulated, forwarded, and broadcast to unintended recipients. Using the SecureSend web portal, you can only send an email to those accounts set up through Lux Scientiae's SecureSend (which, for us, is [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com)).

## Office policies regarding e-mail

**Response time:** E-mail will be checked only during normal office hours, 4 times per day (or more). We will make every effort to respond to e-mails within 24 hours. An e-mail sent after 12:00 PM on Friday will not receive a response until the following Monday.

**E-mail access:** E-mail will be managed primarily by the clinical and nursing staff. All staff members will have password-protected access to the general e-mail service. Pertinent questions and concerns will be discussed with your child's physician before the staff responds.

**E-mail responses:** If the question you submit can be responded to in a short and concise manner, the staff will reply via e-mail. However, for questions that require a more detailed response, the staff will contact you via telephone. Please make sure to include your phone number on all e-mails you send to us.

**Office security:** All desktop workstations in the office are equipped with password-protected screen savers.

**E-mail security:** We will not forward patient-identifiable information to a third party without your express permission. We will not use registered e-mail addresses in marketing schemes or give out your address to third parties.

**Your teenager will also be allowed to use this service:** Any child over the age of 13 may sign himself/herself up for the e-mail service. This allows your child to continue to communicate with his/her physician openly, honestly, and confidentially about all subject matters.

## E-mail directions

**E-mail must be concise:** Please limit each e-mail message to one issue. This allows us to maximize message triage efficiency. Please schedule an appointment for your child if the issue is too complex or sensitive to discuss via e-mail.

**All e-mails must include:** The e-mail's subject line should include the reason for your e-mail followed by your child's name (i.e. "Refill Request, Joe Smith"). The body of the e-mail should include your child's date of birth and the phone number(s) where you can be reached in case the office staff needs to speak with you.

**Before transmitting the e-mail:** Please double-check the message and any attachments to verify that no unintended information is included.

**E-mails will become a part of your child's medical record:** All e-mails will be printed and/or filed in your child's medical record.

## Signing up and using the Service

**Step 1:** Read this Agreement and complete page 3. This Agreement will only be accepted in person at our office.

**IMPORTANT: We will only reply to e-mails from Users that have submitted this Agreement in person.**

**Step 2:** Log on to [secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com](https://secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com) (a link can also be found on our main web page, [www.stclairpediatrics.com](https://www.stclairpediatrics.com)).

**Step 3:** Set up your account by clicking on "Register your email address for secure sending." Enter your name, e-mail address and password. This password is the one you will use to log onto [secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com](https://secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com) with your e-mail address. You then need to create a security question and password. These will be used to access a secure e-mail sent you by [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com).

**To send an e-mail:** Log onto [secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com](https://secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com) with your e-mail address and password. You can then "Send a New Secure Message" to [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com) by clicking "Compose."

**To access an e-mail sent to you from [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com):** The e-mail you receive will contain the line: "Click here to access your message." After clicking the link, you will be taken to a web portal, which will request two passwords. The first is the correct response to the security question you created during account registration. The second is specific to the e-mail sent to you and can be located in the body of the e-mail. You will then be taken to the actual e-mail sent to you by [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com).

**IMPORTANT:** Anyone can send a non-secure e-mail to [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com). The only way to ensure the information you send is secure is by logging onto [secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com](https://secur SEND.stclairpediatrics.com).

## Disclaimers

We are not liable for breaches of confidentiality caused by the User or any third party or for any information lost due to technical failures.

It is your responsibility to inform us of changes to your e-mail address.

This agreement describes procedures that govern an individual's use of our secure e-mail system and defines the steps that must be taken by patients or their representatives who wish to correspond via e-mail with St. Clair Pediatrics. This policy applies to the informational uses of e-mail and does not cover the ethical, legal, and regulatory issues associated with e-mail consultations.

We reserve the right to deny a User's request to communicate with him/her via e-mail.



# Secure E-mail Agreement

Greg T. Garrison, M.D.  
Jill A. Johnston, M.D.  
Kevin M. Ponciroli, M.D.  
Ginny Minnigerode, C.P.N.P.

## Please Remember

If you have an urgent matter or an emergency situation, you should not rely on e-mail to request assistance or to describe the urgent matter or emergency situation. Instead, you should act as though provider/patient e-mail is not available to you and seek assistance by means consistent with your needs (for example, contacting the office or the on-call physician via telephone or taking your child to the emergency room).

E-mail on your computer, your laptop, and/or your PDA has inherent privacy risks – especially when your e-mail access is provided through your employer or when access to your e-mail is not continuously password protected.

In order to process and respond to your e-mail in a timely and accurate manner, individuals at St. Clair Pediatrics other than your health care provider will read your e-mail message. Your message is not a private communication between you and your child’s treating physician.

Neither you nor the person reading your e-mail can see the facial expressions or gestures or hear the voice of the sender. E-mail can be misinterpreted.

## Please provide the following information:

User’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

User’s E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

User’s Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

User’s Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## For which patients do you authorize us to communicate PHI to the above e-mail address?

Patient’s Name	Patient’s Date of Birth	User’s Relationship to Patient

I have read, understood, and agree to the statements in pages 1 through 3 of this Agreement. I certify the e-mail address provided on this Agreement is accurate, and that I, or my designee on my behalf, accept full responsibility for messages sent to or from this address. I understand the use of e-mail is not appropriate for urgent matters or emergency situations. I understand any e-mail sent to [mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com](mailto:mydocs@stclairpediatrics.com) will be read primarily by the office staff and is not a private communication between myself and my child’s physician. I agree to hold harmless St. Clair Pediatrics and individuals associated with it from any and all claims and liabilities arising from or related to this Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date