



511 Huron Street, Stratford Ontario N5A 5T8

Introductory Letter - Dr. Ellen Tousaw

Hello! My name is Dr. Ellen Tousaw and I am excited to be joining the Avon Family Medicine Centre, part of STAR Family Health Team. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and my practice policies.

My Background

I was born and raised in Goderich, Ontario. I completed my undergraduate degree and medical school at the University of Ottawa. I completed my residency training through the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at Western University. The majority of my training was based in Stratford. Since completing residency, I have worked in Clinton, St. Mary's, Stratford, and Tavistock. I am no stranger to this region and am excited to be starting a practice here. Besides comprehensive family medicine, I provide pregnancy, labour/birth, and postpartum care; surgical assistant services at Stratford General Hospital; and sexual healthcare through Huron Perth Public Health.

My Approach to Your Health

As your family physician, I am involved in many aspects of your health, from disease prevention, to active treatment, and beyond. I am here to advocate on your behalf and help you navigate our healthcare system. For our relationship to be of therapeutic nature, it must be grounded in mutual trust and respect. Below are some of my policies which help create a safe and respectful clinic environment. Please take time to familiarize yourself with them.

Appointments

When booking an appointment, you will be asked about the nature of the visit. Knowing the reason for your visit helps me to prepare, and assists with scheduling appointments for the entire day. Certain issues take longer than others, so knowing this beforehand is extremely helpful for overall clinic flow. To ensure each of your concerns is thoroughly and appropriately addressed, my policy is to **limit each appointment to two concerns**. Follow-up appointments may be necessary to make sure each concern is given the appropriate attention.

Missed & Late Appointments

Missing your appointment or arriving late will affect all appointments booked later that day. Please provide at least 24 hours' notice when canceling or rebooking appointments. If you arrive late, you may be asked to rebook. **Missed appointments will be subject to a fee**, according to clinic policy. Missing more than 3 appointments in one year, or frequently arriving late, will result in dismissal from the practice.

Same Day Appointments

If you have an issue you feel is urgent, a same day appointment may be provided for you. These same-day slots are not used for routine health visits (such as blood pressure checks, reviewing bloodwork, etc.). **For urgent issues, if you can, please come to our clinic rather than a walk-in clinic.** Walk-in clinics do not provide us with information regarding your visits, which negatively affects my ability to coordinate your care and follow-up appropriately. I will try my best to see you in a timely manner.

Harassment and Aggressive or Violent Behaviour

Our clinic has a **zero-tolerance policy** regarding behaviours or actions that may be interpreted as harassing, threatening, aggressive, or violent towards any of the clinic staff, myself, or fellow patients. Failure to respect this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the practice.

Prescription Renewals

We have recently implemented a clinic-wide policy regarding prescription renewals. **There will be a charge for all prescription renewals without an appointment.** To avoid being charged for a medication renewal, please ask me to refill any required medications at your appointment. This request will not count towards the policy of two concerns per visit outlined above. Please keep in mind that prescription refill requests may not be processed outside of office hours such as evenings, weekends, and holidays.

Narcotic (Opioid) Medications

Examples include Percocet, Oxycocet, Oxycotin, Dilaudid, Morphine, Tylenol #3, Fentanyl, etc. These medications are appropriate in very limited situations. They come with high risk of side-effects including addiction, overdose, cognitive impairment, and increased pain sensitivity. I rarely initiate these medications outside of select appropriate circumstances. For patients already on high doses of narcotic, I will help initiate a supervised reduction to reach safe doses. If I prescribe you these medications, **you will be required to sign a narcotics agreement** and participate in regular drug testing. Breach of the agreement will result in loss of access to prescription narcotics and possible dismissal from the practice. Other controlled substances, such as benzodiazepines and stimulants, may be subject to similar policies.

Non-Insured Services & Forms

Common examples of services not covered by OHIP are forms for school or work, sick notes, insurance documents, driver's medicals, cosmetic procedures, and TB skin testing. **You are responsible for payment of these services, and will be informed of the cost in advance.** Please inform staff if you have a form to be completed when booking your appointment. Before submitting a form for me to complete, review it carefully and complete all your required sections. Keep in mind that many forms require background medical information and reviewing your chart, which can be very time-consuming. Most forms take additional time outside of clinic hours to complete. For these reasons, it may take up to 1-2 weeks to complete your forms.

Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with my practice policies.

I look forward to meeting you!