

**Practice Philosophy:** Our physicians are practitioners of traditional Internal Medicine. Internal Medicine is a specialty that focuses on the medical illness and conditions effecting adults. To qualify as Internists, our doctors have completed advanced training in this area. Both are Board Certified in Internal Medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Internists are also known as diagnosticians because they use their detective skills as physicians to fully evaluate their patient's symptoms. In this way, they are best prepared to develop a thorough and effective treatment plan.

Our doctor's philosophy is to consider each patient individually. They carefully determine the diagnostic and therapeutic methods that are indicated in each case. As Internal Medicine specialists, our doctors are also skilled in the methods and practice of adult preventive medicine. They routinely provide an array of screening tests to their patients designed to detect common disorders in their early stages when treatment is most effective and least costly.

Our Internists serve as their patient's family doctor in many cases. Quite frequently they are called upon to treat patients with minor and not so minor acute illnesses such as colds, sore throats, diarrhea, bronchitis, flu, back pain, and upset stomachs.

Internists are renowned for their skill in the management of common chronic adult diseases including hypertension, high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, diabetes, asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis, arthritis, stomach disorders, osteoporosis, and the illnesses associated with obesity and physical inactivity.

Dr Woodson and Watts are self-employed physicians who work directly for their patients. They consider it unethical to place anyone's interests ahead of the needs of the patient. Their policy is to never allow any insurance plan or HMO to interfere with their medical opinions or recommendations. At DeKalb Internal Medicine, our practice of medicine is guided by the Hippocratic Oath, which clearly states that it is the primary duty of a physician to always consider the needs of the patient first. We interpret this to mean that we will not withhold information from you about your medical condition nor will we fail to thoroughly explain and discuss with you the tests or treatments necessary in your case regardless of whether or not your insurance company agrees with our opinion.

## Office Procedures

**Routine Office** Visits are by appointment and are of two basic types. Visits for acute illnesses or injuries and those for follow-up of an acute or chronic condition.

**Urgent Care Office Visits** are reserved in our schedule everyday. These appointments are held open for patients with acute illnesses or injuries so that you can be seen on the same day you call. These appointments fill quickly each morning so please call as soon after 8:00 AM as possible to arrange your sick call appointment.

**Routine Pelvic Exams and Pap Smears** are provided by our doctors. In addition we provide the following office gynecologic therapies: contraception (birth control pills), hormone replacement therapy for perimenopausal (progesterone cream) and postmenopausal women (estrogen and progesterone), incontinence, and treatment of uncomplicated vaginal infections due to bacteria, herpes, and yeast. Other procedures provided include pelvic ultrasound and endometrial biopsy.

**Bone Density Testing** of the fracture prone hip and spine with the most accurate and precise equipment is available in our office to all patients in whom testing is indicated. This test is used mainly to screen women for premature bone loss around the time of menopause when effective measures can be taken to prevent the development of osteoporosis. Other indications for testing include

Caucasian or Asian race, thinness, a maternal history of osteoporosis, use of certain drugs like thyroid hormone or cortisone, smoking, heavy alcohol use, or a medical history of certain diseases which cause osteoporosis secondarily.

**Body Composition Analysis using DXA (dual energy X-ray absorptiometry)** is the most advanced method of measuring your body's lean and fat body mass. This technique provides percentages for the right and left upper and lower extremities, the torso, and the body as a whole.

**Quantitative Intimal-Medial Thickness (QIMT)** of the internal common carotid artery is performed non-invasively with ultrasound in our office. This test result is used to tell us whether or not cholesterol is being abnormally deposited in the wall of the artery thickening it. Artery wall thickening occurs before the disease atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, leads to arterial damage. Atherosclerosis is the main cause of heart attack and stroke. Risk for heart attack and stroke rises as the arterial wall thickens. The thicker the wall, the more advanced the disease process. QIMT directly measures the effect of all the patient's risk factors (cholesterol, blood pressure, family history, etc.), on the wall of the common carotid artery. This direct approach is an accurate and rational method of selecting who to treat and how aggressive treatment should be compared with past methods. Serial measurements of QIMT are useful for monitoring a patient's response to treatment with diet, exercise, and cholesterol lowering drugs.

**The Comprehensive Physical Examination (CPE)** includes a thorough medical history and a complete physical exam both performed directly by the physician. The CPE is used to establish or thoroughly update a patient's medical history and physical condition. The CPE helps orient the doctor to your specific medical needs. During the CPE, the doctor and patient come to know each other and forging an intimate relationship upon which is built a bond of trust and friendship. This is known in medicine as the patient-doctor relationship. Our doctors believe that having a healthy patient-doctor relationship is critical for the patient as well as the doctor. During the CPE, the doctor usually spends about one hour directly with you and at least another 30 minutes evaluating the results of your exam over the next few days. Thus, the CPE allows our doctors to become thoroughly familiar with your specific medical profile. In so doing, they are best prepared to define and treat all present problems and even anticipate the likelihood of future medical conditions. Procedure During the, the doctor will ask you about your current and past medical problems as well as review your family history. Next comes the complete physical exam where the doctor pays special attention to areas of the body discussed during the medical history. In addition, it is common for several diagnostic tests to be obtained during a CPE. These usually include: a chest X-ray, EKG, urinalysis, complete blood count, complete blood chemistry examination including blood salts, blood sugar, kidney function and liver function tests, serum iron tests, tests of thyroid function, a comprehensive blood lipid profile including total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides and a test for hidden or occult blood in the stool. For men, we also commonly obtain a prostate specific antigen (PSA) to test for prostate cancer. However, the tests ordered for you specifically will be determined primarily by your individual needs. Other tests may be ordered depending on your individual history or physical findings at the examination. The CPE will take about two to three hours of your time to complete. Indications: Established patients have CPEs depending upon their personal medical history, the nature of their active medical problems, or their age. As a rule of thumb used for generally healthy adults, we recommend a CPE once in the teens and twenties, every three years in the thirties, every other year after age forty and every year after age sixty-five. Preparation for a CPE: Please make a list of all the problems you wish to discuss at the examination. It is important that you complete a new Patient Medical Health questionnaire prior to coming in for your CPE which helps the doctor quickly update your old and new medical history. Please bring all medicines and vitamins you take regularly with you to the office. For a CPE scheduled in the morning, please don't eat anything after 8:00 PM the night before your appointment unless you are a diabetic who should not fast before coming in for their exam. If you are scheduled for an afternoon CPE, you may eat a light breakfast before 8:00 AM. Patients should take their regular medications on the day of the examination. You may drink water, black coffee, or tea the morning of your exam as long as you do not add sugar (artificial sweetener is OK).

**Flexible Sigmoidoscopy** is performed with a soft plastic tube approximately 3/8 inch in diameter. This flexible tube is filled with a bundle of optical fibers which lets the doctor get a clear view of the inside of the rectum and colon most often affected by cancer. Flexible sigmoidoscopy is not a painful procedure. The procedure is performed in our regular exam rooms and there is no need for you to be sedated for the exam. You will have no problem driving or returning to work after the procedure. The test takes about 10 minutes. Indications: Flexible sigmoidoscopy is recommended for the evaluation of patient's with symptoms referable to the rectum or colon. It is recommended routinely (every 3 years) for all adults over the age of 40 years as a colon and rectal cancer-screening test. A test for hidden or occult blood in the stool should also be performed annually in all adults over the age of 40. Adverse Experiences with Sigmoidoscopy Usually this procedure is not painful being well tolerated by almost everyone. Sometimes during the procedure, cramp-like abdominal pain occurs briefly. After the procedure, some patients have abdominal bloating for a few hours and/or extra flatus. If after having this procedure your symptoms are more marked or you have fever or rectal bleeding, please call us immediately or go directly to the emergency room. Preparation: Please use two Fleets Enemas just before the having the test. On the day of the test, follow a clear liquid diet until the procedure is complete. Fleets Enemas are available at your pharmacy. They are a pre-mixed phosphorus solution and come in a disposable enema bottle designed for self-administration. Instructions for giving the enema are included in the box. Administer and then evacuate the enemas at home just prior to coming over for the procedure. If you have any questions about flexible sigmoidoscopy or the patient preparation, please call us.

**Office Visits by Appointment:** We see patients from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. After 4:30 PM and on holidays and weekends we use an answering service. They will refer all emergency and urgent calls to the doctor on call. You may call 404.298.9951 to make an appointment or reach the on-call physician.

**Hospital Care:** We use DeKalb Medical Center for most of our hospital admissions and procedures. DeKalb has a team of specialized Internists known as Hospitalists who provide inpatient care for our patients. These physicians work only in the hospital. One member of their group is always on duty in the hospital to assist the patient as needed.

**Sick Call:** We are usually able to see our patients the same day they call for urgent medical care. Please call as soon after 8:00 AM as you can. We will do everything possible to work you in before noon of that day.

**Prescription Refills:** Please let us know you need a refill authorization phoned in or new prescription written well before your medications run out. One idea is to ask your pharmacist to call us when you pick up your last refill. Another is to use our web site to request a refill.

**General Business Provisions:** The person receiving the medical service is responsible for their bill. Both doctors participate in a number of PPO plans and Dr. Watts also participates in several HMOs. To see if they are on your plan, please check with the business office. Unless other arrangements have been made, please be prepared to make payment in full for the medical services you receive at the time you check out of the office.

**Payment Options:** We accept cash, personal check, or credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover).

**Delinquent Accounts:** Accounts with unpaid balances due in excess of 4 months (120 days) of the date the service are considered delinquent and are subject to referral to a collection agency. Walkout Statements: At the time you checkout of the office, you will receive a receipt indicating the amount you paid at that office visit.

**Insurance Filing:** Unless you are in one of the PPO or HMO plans we participate in or have Medicare, you are responsible for filing your own insurance claim. The Walkout Statement provided by us details the tests codes, diagnosis codes, and charges and includes all the information required by your insurance company from the doctor to process your claim.

**Returned Checks:** A \$20 fee will be added to any account when a check is returned to us from the bank for insufficient funds.

**New Patients Welcome**

Office Hours by Appointment

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Decatur, Georgia 30033

404.298.9951 voice

404.298.5577 fax