

Joseph E. Salvatore, MD

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Appointments

Initial evaluations and consultations are scheduled for up to 60 minutes. Follow-up appointments are scheduled anywhere from 30-60 minutes depending upon clinical requirements.

Cancellations and Missed Appointments

Dr. Salvatore's goal is to provide quality, reliable care to all patients. No-shows, late arrivals, and cancellations impact not only his schedule but also that of other patients and colleagues who need his time.

When you book your appointment, you are holding a space on Dr. Salvatore's calendar that is no longer available to anyone else. This marks a commitment of Dr. Salvatore's time during which he is at your exclusive service. Appointments are in high demand, and your advanced notice will allow another patient access to this time slot.

If you must cancel your visit, please contact Dr. Salvatore 24 hours in advance of your appointment, or by Friday at 3 PM if your appointment is on a Monday. You can do this via email (jes@salvatoremd.com) or voicemail (609-252-0777). He will then follow up with you over email, text or phone to reschedule. Please note that you may have to wait several weeks for the next available opportunity.

Occasionally, and as a courtesy, Dr. Salvatore will reach out to confirm your appointment, **but this does not always happen.**

You are responsible for showing up for your appointments on time, whether in person or remotely. If you do not cancel within 24 hours, or arrive late to your appointment, you will be charged the full fee of your missed appointment. For new patients, a no show or late cancellation will result in a full charge of the new patient fee.

There are, of course, last minute emergencies such as significant medical illness that can jeopardize your ability to make your appointment, even remotely, and fees will be waived under such circumstances provided you have demonstrated good faith efforts to avoid cancellations.

Communication

609-252-0777 Office

609-228-4224 Fax

In between office visits, **Dr. Salvatore relies almost exclusively on email to communicate with patients.** If you are unable to email with any consistency or reliability, you may unfortunately not be a good fit for this practice, and Dr. Salvatore can help you find another referral.

Dr. Salvatore's preferred email address is jes@salvatoremd.com, although you may see him reply with ricksalvatore@gmail.com, which also works. 609-252-0777 is both Dr. Salvatore's office number and cell phone. **He is therefore available for texting for urgent matters only.** Text messaging is convenient, but much harder for Dr. Salvatore to monitor compared to an email inbox; and so, it is easier to lose track of received messages.

On Monday through Friday, Dr. Salvatore or one of his associates will check email and phone messages at least twice per day, at 12 PM and 4 PM. Non-urgent communication will be returned before the end of the next business day. Emails and phone messages received outside normal business hours and during weekends and holidays are generally returned by the end of the next business day.

Email is best used for the following reasons:

- Scheduling/rescheduling appointments
- Requesting prescription refills
- Asking straightforward medication-related questions
- Alerting Dr. Salvatore to medication side-effects and significant changes in symptoms
- Submitting requested "mini-reports"

There are some circumstances, however, that are not well-served by email:

- **NOT** for emergencies. Please see below.
- Extensive "stream-of-consciousness" writing and/or journal entries
- Lengthy, unsolicited descriptions of symptoms

Unless specifically defined as a form of treatment, i.e., a replacement for a scheduled office visit, *email and phone communication with Dr. Salvatore is considered a "matter of business,"* and is therefore focused on the logistics of scheduling appointments, managing prescriptions and addressing medication management and side-effects. When patients do send long emails with significant amounts of information and/or multiple questions, Dr. Salvatore will likely suggest that these matters will either be saved for a future visit or lead to a rescheduling of the next appointment.

Confidentiality

All patient information is considered confidential and will *not* be released to any third party unless you have given explicit permission to Dr. Salvatore. While such consent is usually in written form, Dr. Salvatore will occasionally solicit your permission verbally and note this in the medical record. Third parties, such as insurance companies, will tend to request the full medical record. However, in the interest of your privacy, Dr. Salvatore typically provides a treatment summary letter instead of your office notes, and this is almost always satisfactory.

- Please note that Dr. Salvatore is **obligated to breach confidentiality if a patient discloses a specific threat of imminent serious physical harm or death to a clearly identified or identifiable victim or victims, and the patient has the apparent intent and ability to carry out such a threat**. In such circumstances, Dr. Salvatore must contact law enforcement in order to protect the threatened party.

- Furthermore, if Dr. Salvatore feels one of his patients is in significant danger, whether by neglect, poor judgment or intentional self-harm, he may notify appropriate individuals in the interest of safety. Dr. Salvatore will do his best to treat such patients within the bounds of full confidentiality, but some circumstances require broader communication. This may include, but is not limited to: family, significant others, local therapists, family physicians and academic administrators.

- If you choose to see Dr. Salvatore without submitting any insurance claims, there will be no record of your visit other than within Dr. Salvatore's private medical records. If you require medication prescriptions, you must accept that pharmacies will have a record of your transactions.

Administrative Requests

Dr. Salvatore does not charge for routine contact with patients--usually in the form of brief emails--in between office visits. Nor does he charge for the time he spends sending out prescriptions, filling out prior authorization requests, or collaborating with other professionals about your care. These "back office" tasks are considered to be routine aspects of care and are effectively included in your fees.

From time to time, and with your consent, Dr. Salvatore is asked to provide information to third parties about your psychiatric and medical history. This ranges from having to compose treatment summary letters to completing disability requests, to other matters that involve his time beyond the routine tasks outlined above. Typically, these requests require at least 30 minutes of his time, and often longer. There

Emergencies

If you feel you are in any physical danger, whether from medication side effects or your own impulses, immediately call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department.

In an emergency, do not call or email Dr. Salvatore's office before contacting 911 or visiting an ER. Once you have received emergent medical and/or psychiatric care, please contact Dr. Salvatore and he will work with you to resolve the situation and formulate a plan.

Fees

Before scheduling your first appointment, Dr. Salvatore or one of his associates will provide you with a description of the fees for each visit. No more than once per year, Dr. Salvatore may increase his fees for follow-up appointments. You will be notified of these changes before you arrive for the next visit under the new fee structure.

Payment and Insurance

· **Full payment is required by the end of each session.** Dr. Salvatore will require that you keep a credit card securely on file beginning with your first appointment. Going forward, you will have the option of either using this card or directing Dr. Salvatore or his bookkeeper to use a different form of payment.

· In advance of your first visit, you will be sent a link to complete an online data sheet. Upon completing this form, your information will be temporarily stored on our HIPAA compliant, encrypted Google Forms document. It will then be transferred by us to Quickbooks Payments, which is a fully encrypted, PCI compliant payment site operated by Intuit, Inc. *Once we transfer the information to Quickbooks Payments, the information will be permanently deleted from our Google Forms database and only kept with Quickbooks.*

· **Dr. Salvatore is considered an out-of-network provider to all patients.** This means he does not have contracts with insurance companies to accept copayments or coinsurance for office visits. Therefore, patients are responsible for the full payment of each office visit.

· Many insurance plans offer partial reimbursements for out-of-network office visits. Some plans, such as HMOs, only reimburse or subsidize patients for seeing physicians in their network. You are responsible for determining what level of reimbursement you are entitled to receive from your insurance plan and thus must factor this into your decision to see Dr. Salvatore as a patient.

- Shortly after an office visit with Dr. Salvatore, you will receive a receipt by mail or email. This “superbill” can be submitted to your insurance company for reimbursement, if your plan allows for it. This receipt will contain all the information necessary for a claim to be processed, including diagnosis (ICD) and encounter (CPT) codes, Dr. Salvatore’s Tax ID number, fee and date of service.

Office Coverage

Occasionally, Dr. Salvatore will be away from his office and arrange for another psychiatrist to be available for his patients. Instructions on how to contact the covering physician will be clearly presented in both an outgoing voicemail message as well as an automated email response.

Generally, covering physicians are available for urgent and emergent medical situations that require a response before Dr. Salvatore’s return. This includes, but is not limited to, medication refills.

Prescription Refills

Please note your supply of medication, especially in anticipation of weekends and vacations. You are encouraged to not wait until the day you run out of medication to reach out to Dr. Salvatore for a refill. *You need to be particularly mindful of your supply to ensure minimal gaps in your dosing schedule.*

When contacting Dr. Salvatore about renewing medications for the first time, please include the following information in your message:

- Your name and date of birth
- Pharmacy name and phone number
- Medication: specify brand or generic
- Dose of medication, i.e. the pill size in milligrams
- Frequency of medication dosing, i.e. twice daily, at bedtime, etc.
- Number of pills to be prescribed

If you are contacting Dr. Salvatore about renewing a medication he has previously prescribed for you, please specify all the above information minus your name, DOB, and pharmacy information (unless it has changed).

In most cases, Dr. Salvatore will either know this information or have quick access to such data. However, *you should not assume this*, so please provide explicit directions in case he is unable to verify your information quickly.

