



# New Providence Internal Medicine Associates

(908) 464-7300

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[www.npinternalmed.com](http://www.npinternalmed.com)

## Insurance Adventures

Did you know that even if the name of your insurance is the same, you may have different coverage? Most of the major plans have dozens of sub-plans. Occasionally some employers will change the type of plan, even if it's with the same company (e.g. Aetna, Horizon, Cigna, United). These could have a different copay, different rules for referrals, etc. This does not apply to Medicare. So, it's extremely important that at each visit, you have your insurance card with you, so we can copy the most current version for our records. This will help to reduce errors with referrals and billing.



## Keep in Touch Electronically

Did you know that you can stay in touch with us without ever using your telephone? Go to our website, [www.NPInternalMed.com](http://www.NPInternalMed.com) and click on "talk to us." This will give you the opportunity to request a prescription refill, a referral, or an appointment. You can also directly email to the doctors or to the staff with specific questions or concerns.

It should be obvious that electronic communication should never be used for an urgent problem. If you need a response right away, please do pick up the phone. Also, our current email is not encrypted, so anything of a highly sensitive or private nature should not be done electronically. We've found this type of communication very effective for all if used correctly.



## Grapefruit Juice?

While grapefruit is a very healthy food, there is the possibility of interactions with certain medications. Interestingly, there is a chemical found in grapefruit that can interfere with the breakdown of some medicines. This can cause abnormally high blood levels of these medicines. For example, if you take Norvasc (a calcium channel blocker used to lower BP) with grapefruit juice, your blood

pressure may drop excessively. It is important to note that it takes quite a bit of grapefruit to cause this interaction. So, a small grapefruit with breakfast shouldn't be a problem, but a large glass of grapefruit juice taken with the pill could be. Other medicines with possible interactions could be other calcium channel blockers (e.g. Cardizem) and statins to lower cholesterol (e.g. Zocor, Lipitor).



## What's the Word on Carbs?

Excess consumption of carbohydrates can cause weight gain, elevated blood sugars, and high triglycerides. However, not all carbohydrates are bad for you. Examples of good carbohydrates would be fruit, whole grain breads, brown rice and sweet potatoes. Examples of bad carbs would be

sweets, white bread, bagels, pasta white rice, and white potatoes. This is not to say that you cannot ever have sweets or bagels, but it's much healthier to have more good carbs and fewer of the bad. The South Beach Diet gives a very good discussion of this concept.

## See our Star!!

Don't miss Dr. Hakim on TV-36! He'll talk about general health topics Sundays 7, 10 PM; Mondays 6, 9 PM; Fridays 8, 11 PM