

Telehealth Tips



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Section 1: What is telehealth?

A consultation or an appointment with a health care provider over the phone or via an online video platform like Skype, FaceTime, or Zoom.

Telehealth visits are not recorded; they simply allow the health care provider to see the patient only during the visit from a remote location without having to meet at the clinic. Think of it as a “virtual visit” with your health care provider.



Section 2: Does my health care provider offer telehealth?

To find out if your health care provider offers telehealth just give their office a call! Depending on your healthcare need your health care provider may request to see you in person.

Telehealth is convenient, but it's especially helpful if you:



- Live far from your doctor's office
- Have high risk health conditions
- Have limited movement, time, or transportation
- Need medical care while you're away from home

Section 3: You have identified that your health care provider offers telehealth, what next?

Talk to your insurance company about coverage and copays.

Avoid any unexpected bills by checking with your insurance company to see if telehealth appointments are covered and there is telehealth coverage for the specific type of appointment you are seeking. Not all insurance companies cover telehealth or limit coverage. For those that do offer coverage for telehealth appointments, you still may have to pay a copay.

Section 4: How telehealth appointments work

Depending on what your health care provider offers, you can get medical services in different ways. Two of the most common are:

- a. A patient portal. With the security of a username and password, a patient portal lets you send and get emails from your doctor or nurse, ask for prescription refills, and set up appointments. Your doctor can also share your lab or imaging test results and tell you what they mean. This is often faster than waiting to talk to them on the phone.



- b. Online video appointment. Some doctors can let you have an appointment through a phone call or video conference, using a virtual platform.

Whatever telehealth platform you might be using, you will need a few basic pieces of equipment to do a telehealth visit:

- A computer or mobile device. Ask your health care provider which specific devices their software will run on. Desktop computers? Laptops? Tablets? Smartphones?
- An integrated or external microphone. Most mobile devices and computers will have a built-in microphone. If the device does not have one, you'll need to find a separate microphone.
- An integrated or external camera. Like with microphones, many devices now already



have an integrated camera. However, if you are using a desktop computer or older laptop, they might not have a built-in webcam.

- **Internet Connection.** Having a solid internet connection is a crucial piece of having a successful telehealth visit. If you have a shaky connection, not even the best telehealth app will be able to deliver quality video.

Setting up your device for a telehealth appointment

- View your telehealth appointment confirmation email
- Download and install video platform software if needed
- Check your audio
- Check your video
- If you are having trouble, see if there is a contact on your email for trouble shooting or contact your health care providers office

Section 5: Getting the most out of your telehealth appointment

Try the technology ahead of time. Telehealth comes in many forms.

Before you hop on a virtual appointment with your doctor, do a trial run to make sure you understand the system and work out any kinks. You may have to download an app, software, or program. You might also have to wait for your turn in a virtual “waiting room.”



Be prepared. Whether you have a call or a video appointment, write down your symptoms, medicines you take, and questions you have so you don't forget anything when speaking to your health care professional.