

20 Things to Know about Telehealth

Telehealth or telemedicine are both used to describe any health care service that uses technology for visits with your provider or care team that are not in person. Other terms are digital medicine, virtual visits, video visits, e-health or m-health (for “mobile”). Here are twenty things patients and family members have identified that are important to know about telehealth.

1. **Telehealth** in place of in-person visits is a **good option** during the COVID-19 pandemic to **keep people safe** from COVID-19 infection.
2. A **telehealth visit can save you time** because you don't have to go to the clinic or wait in the waiting room.
3. **Telehealth visits usually cost the same** as an in-person visit with the same copays and deductibles. The difference could depend on your insurance. Don't hesitate to ask what you will have to pay out of pocket and when it is due.
4. **Ask in advance how to pay your copay** in case you can pay on the day of your visit rather than waiting for a bill.
5. **If you have Medicare, your provider is required to get your consent** before starting a telehealth visit.
6. When you schedule a telehealth visit, if you are unsure you need to do **ask if someone from the clinic can help get you set up for your visit**. Some clinics will even do a test with you before your visit.
7. If your provider allows it, **you might be able to have other people** like a family member or care giver **join your virtual visit**.
8. **You will need** a device with **audio**, such as a speaker and mic and **video**, such as a webcam or a camera that is embedded in a computer, smartphone or tablet **for a telehealth visit**.
9. **You will need a way to connect with your health care team and may need an internet connection, data plan, email or something else**.
10. **Make sure you have a quiet, private place** to have your telehealth visit.
11. If you are not in a private area and are in place where others might be able to listen in, **protect your privacy and use a headset or earbuds**.
12. **Do not multitask during your telehealth visit**. Treat it just like an in-person visit.
13. **Make sure your provider has a back-up plan**, like calling you on your phone, if the telehealth visit doesn't work.
14. **Have your list of questions written down** so you don't forget what to ask. It's easy to get distracted when you're trying to figure out how to do your telehealth visit.
15. **Get all your medications** and have them with you for your telehealth visit.
16. When your visit starts, **if you can't tell who a person on the health care team is at any time, ask them who they are**. They should have identification badges or a sign behind them saying who they are. They often forget so you might have to remind them to tell you who they are.
17. **Ask how long your visit is** if you are unsure. You can do this when you schedule or once you connect for your telehealth visit.
18. Once your video is connected, take a look at where you are in the frame. **Can the provider see your entire face?** If you can't tell, ask your provider or care team if they can see you okay.
19. During the visit, **if ANYTHING is not working for you for any reason, let the provider or care team know** – no matter if it's because the video is glitchy, you can't hear them, you don't feel comfortable or any other reason.
20. At the end of the visit, **ask your provider or care team for a copy of your treatment plan or summary**, including when they want to see you next.

BONUS: Check out this great six-minute video: *What to Expect from a Telehealth Visit*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Olgs6mMXt6U&feature=youtu.be>