

## **TELEMEDICINE VISITS**

Telemedicine or telehealth visits use audio and video to connect you to your healthcare provider. These are sometimes called “virtual visits”. You will be able to see, hear, and talk to your provider, just like you do in the office. Currently, these visits can be done between you at home and your provider in their office. The telehealth appointment is private, using secure software to make the connection. You will be billed for the visit the same as if you were seeing your health care provider in person.

### **HOW TO PREPARE FOR A VIRTUAL VISIT**

#### **1-2 days before your telemedicine appointment**

- Decide which device you will use for the visit. Virtual visits work best when your doctor can clearly see you. There are many options for the visit:
  - Desktop computer with external webcam and microphone
  - Laptop with webcam (integrated or external) and microphone
  - Tablet with camera (iPad or Android tablet)
  - Phone with camera (iPhone, Android phone, Windows phone)
  
- Plan where you will be during the visit. Make sure the space is private, so you can discuss personal medical information.
  
- You should do the visit in a quiet, well-lit room. You can sit near a window for natural light or near a lamp. But don't sit in front of the window or lamp, or you will appear like a shadow.
  
- Find a steady place to put your laptop, tablet, or phone. You should not hold your tablet or phone during the visit, as this can cause a very wobbly video. If you are using a webcam, try to have this at eye level. Prop up your phone or tablet. If you don't have a stand, you can make one yourself with cardboard. Your doctor will need to do an exam, so you may need to move your chair or the camera during the visit.
  - One view of your face, during the history part of the visit
  - One view of your whole body, during the exam part of the visit
  
- If possible, use a wired internet connection (with a cable), or make sure that your phone is connected to your home's wi-fi.
  
- You will receive instructions from your doctor's office on using the telemedicine software. If possible, do a test call with a friend or family member to make sure everything is working.
  
- You can also have a family member or friend added to the visit, but they will need to be invited to the visit. Let your provider know the phone number or email of anyone you want to have in the visit.
  
- If possible, arrange for someone to be with you for the visit. This person can help adjust the camera, troubleshoot any technical problems, and help your doctor during parts of the exam.
  
- If you have balance problems or fall frequently, you should have someone with you during the visit to make sure you are safe.
  
- Complete any forms sent to you by your provider. If possible, send these back to the provider before the visit using a patient portal, email, or fax. Send any notes such as your headache or seizure calendar to your provider using a patient portal, email, or fax.

## **1-2 hours before your telemedicine appointment**

### **Set up and check your computer or phone as you planned above**

- Make sure your space is quiet.
  - Put your pets in another room.
  - Have someone watch your children, preferably in another room.
  - Turn off the TV, radio, or any other things that may make noise
  
- Make sure your computer or device is ready.
  - Be sure that your laptop, tablet, or phone is either fully charged or plugged in.
  - Check your audio: Make sure your volume is on (sound not muted). Test your microphone.
  - Test your video to make sure that the lighting is good – turn on overhead lights, put a lamp near your phone, or sit near (but not in front of) a window.
  - If you are using a computer with a webcam, try to have the webcam at the same level as your eyes.
  - If you are using a smartphone or tablet, you will need a steady surface to prop up your phone.
  - Close any other programs that are running on your computer, tablet, or phone.
  
- Have your doctor’s office number handy, in case you have technical problems and need to call.

### **Prepare yourself**

- Dress appropriately. Your doctor may need to do an exam, so if possible, wear a short-sleeved shirt or T-shirt, shorts, and socks but not shoes.
  
- Wear your glasses and hearing aid, if you need these.
  
- Write down anything you’d like to ask or discuss with the doctor. Have a list of your current medications.
  
- Try to have these things available: paper and pen to take notes and write during the exam, and a flashlight or another phone with a flashlight app to help your provider see you during the exam.
  
- If you can, check your “vital signs” before the visit.
  - Temperature, using a thermometer.
  - Blood pressure, if you have a home monitoring blood pressure device.
  - Weight, if you have a scale at home.
  
- Join the telemedicine visit at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time, so any problems can be fixed.

### **During the visit**

- Your provider will introduce themselves and anyone else on the video visit. You should do the same.
  
- Let your provider know if you can’t hear or see them well.
  
- At the end of the visit, make sure you know next steps:
  - Any needed prescriptions
  - Any testing to be scheduled
  - Follow up appointment
  - Best way to contact your provider
  
- Give your provider feedback about how the visit went. Remember that this visit type is new to everyone.