

Top 10 Tips for Your Telehealth Appointment:



Telehealth is a broad term that includes all health services provided using technology, such as phone, internet, or video-conferencing.



Telemedicine refers to the specific practice of a medical provider (doctor, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner) caring for patients remotely.

1. Ensure your technology meets the meeting requirements

Decide ahead of time what device you will use for your telemedicine appointment (computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet). You'll also need a reliable internet connection. If you don't have one at home, you may be able to find a free wifi hot spot at your local library or at a national food chain. Wi-Fi Map is an app that can help you find a wifi hotspot, without an internet connection.

2. Set-up prior to your appointment

Your physician's office may need you to set up an online video conferencing account or download an app for your telehealth appointment. Ask for a direct contact number in case you have issues during your appointment.

3. Choose a quiet, private area for your appointment

Find a quiet place to reduce distractions and interruptions, and to make sure your doctor can see and hear you during your appointment. Good lighting will also help, try facing a window.

4. Prepare paperwork ahead of time

Prepare or update your recent medical history, medication list, and recent lab work. This will help if you are seeing a specialist or doctor for the first time. Also, have your insurance information, pharmacy contact, consent for telehealth appointment signed, and payment information ready. Most physicians' offices will contact you in advance to obtain basic information and review it prior to the appointment.

5. Obtain vital signs

If you are able, obtain your vital signs prior to your appointment. If you have an electronic blood pressure cuff, you can find your blood pressure and heart rate prior to your appointment. You can also take your weight and temperature at home.

6. Take pictures of areas of concern

Document any rashes, swelling, or areas of concern you want the doctor to look at. Let the physician's office staff know you have photos when you set up your appointment. You may need to email the pictures or upload them into a secure patient app. Likewise, if you have good lighting during your virtual appointment, you can show the doctor your areas of concern there.

7. Be prepared for co-pays

It's important to know most insurance companies consider telehealth visits comparable to a face-to-face visit. You need to expect the same co-pay and any outstanding payment due at the time of your visit.

8. Write down questions ahead of time

Having a new type of visit may cause distraction or stress, writing down your questions to ask your doctor can help reduce it and help you remember everything you want to say.

9. Review your treatment plan

You should review your treatment plan with your physician at the end of your appointment. Repeat what you understand to be the next steps, so your physician can confirm. It's also helpful to take notes during your appointment, so you do not forget key details. Don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions during your appointment too.

10. Set up a follow-up appointment

At the end of your telehealth visit, set up a follow-up visit as necessary. Ask if your next appointment will be another telehealth or face-to-face, so you can prepare appropriately.