



TELEHEALTH: WHAT TO KNOW FOR YOUR FAMILY





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Telehealth can help you get quality care from home when you can't get to your provider. With telehealth (or telemedicine), you can use a phone, computer, or other technology when you and your provider aren't in the same room. You can easily talk to your provider over the phone or video chat. You can also send and receive messages.

TELEHEALTH BASICS

Types of services

You can get many types of care through telehealth. Check with your provider to see what services you may be able to get from home.

You may be able to get:

- General health care, like wellness visits
- Prescriptions for medicines
- Dermatology (skincare)
- Nutrition counseling
- Urgent care (to address common conditions like sinus infections, back pain, urinary tract infections, rashes)
- Remote monitoring services (where you might use a device that sends information to your provider about your vital signs, for example)

Behavioral health services

You can get behavioral health care through telehealth. This includes:

- Mental health counseling
- Follow up on care plans
- Services for substance use disorders, including opioid use disorder

These services are available under most health plans, just like services for your physical health. Ask your provider what they offer.





Types of telehealth visits



Video visits

During the COVID-19 pandemic, [federal policy changes](#) allow you to get care through video conferencing applications (apps) that you may already be using. This includes Apple FaceTime, Facebook Messenger video chat, Google Hangouts video, Zoom, or Skype.

Note: Telehealth is generally a safe and secure way to connect with a provider. But some apps may raise privacy concerns. Your provider's office must protect your health information for telehealth visits just like they do for in-person visits. Talk to your provider's office about any concerns ahead of time.



Audio-only visits

If you don't have access to the internet or video apps, you may be able to get services with a phone call. You may be able to use audio-only (voice) visits for:

- Annual wellness visits
- Diabetes management
- Mental health counseling
- Nutrition counseling
- Advance care planning

Other services may be available by audio only. Check with your provider's office to see what they offer.



STEPS FOR USING TELEHEALTH

How to schedule a telehealth appointment

If you have a provider where you already get care, call their office. Many providers now offer telehealth, even if they didn't before.

If you haven't seen the provider before, call and ask if they're taking new patients.

Ask your provider:

- Do you offer telehealth visits?
- Is telehealth a good choice for my visit?
- How do I schedule it?
- What technology will I need? Will I need to download an app or software?
- If you're concerned about privacy: How will you protect my personal information?

STEPS FOR USING TELEHEALTH



If you have health coverage

Check with your health plan, Medicare plan, or state Medicaid office to learn about your options. If you have Medicaid, your state will determine the kinds of services available through telehealth.

- Your plan may be able to help you get care from home. It may be from your provider or a telehealth company.
- Some insurance companies offer telehealth through their own portal or app. Check their website or call to find out.
- Ask:
 - If you haven't seen the provider before: Is telehealth covered if I'm a new patient?
 - Does my plan cover telehealth?
 - If so, what services does it cover?

For people with Medicare

Telehealth is available. This includes services like common office visits, mental health counseling, and preventive screenings.

For most services, the payment will be the same as an in-person visit. For example, if you have original Medicare, then like office visits, your deductible will apply and your copay will be 20% of the Medicare-approved amount.

Medicare also covers patient-initiated [virtual check-ins](#) and [E-visits](#):

- Virtual check-ins are short communications with a provider. These may happen over phone, video, or other means.
- E-visits are communications through an online patient portal.

Visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) to learn more.

If you don't have health coverage

Some health centers offer telehealth. Use this tool to [find a health center](#) near you. Before you book an appointment, call to ask what services are offered and what your cost would be.



Prepare for your telehealth appointment

- Make sure you have access to a phone or device with internet.
- Find a quiet, private place where you are comfortable.
- Take a video or photo of anything you'd like to show the provider. Send the images ahead of your appointment. This can be especially helpful for an audio-only appointment.
- Have information ready about your allergies, medications, hospitalizations, surgeries, and test results.
- Write down any questions.
- Prepare to take notes.
- Wear loose clothing if you'll need to show the provider something on your skin or a specific part of your body.
- Be ready to show the devices or tools that help you monitor your chronic conditions, if you use any. For example, have your blood pressure monitor nearby.



What to expect during your telehealth visit

- For a scheduled visit, your provider will give you instructions about how to access their system.
- For an unscheduled visit, you'll usually connect to a provider through a website.
- The provider should ask if you agree or "consent" to services by telehealth.
- You'll talk with a provider. This will be similar to discussions during an office visit.
- Let your provider know if you have trouble hearing or seeing them. If there are technical problems, they may be able to continue just by phone.
- At the end, the provider will let you know their recommendations. They may share more information by email or mail. They will let you know how to contact them if you have questions or concerns.



What to do after your telehealth visit

- If any testing is recommended, the provider will arrange for it. Testing can occur at a nearby lab or clinic (or sometimes even from your home). The provider will also give you more information if needed.
- If you need follow-up information, call your provider's office. Ask if you should schedule another telehealth or office visit.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can use telehealth even if English isn't your first language. An interpreter can join and help you talk with the provider. Ask your provider how to connect with an interpreter.

If you have a vision, hearing, or speech disability, you are entitled to aids and services such as:

- Real-time captioning (also known as computer-assisted real-time transcription, or CART)
- Telecommunications relay services (TRS), reached by calling 7-1-1
- Video relay service (VRS)
- Video remote interpreting (VRI)

To learn more, review [*ADA Effective Communication*](#). Ask your provider what aids and services are available for your visit. You may also find help through this guide: [*Getting the Care You Need: A Guide for People with Disabilities*](#).

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- Visit [Telehealth.hhs.gov](https://www.telehealth.hhs.gov).
- Find more resources on telehealth at [go.cms.gov/c2ctelehealth](https://www.go.cms.gov/c2ctelehealth).
- Learn more about health coverage with *From Coverage to Care* at [go.cms.gov/c2c](https://www.go.cms.gov/c2c).
- For Medicare information, visit the [Medicare.gov Telehealth](https://www.Medicare.gov/Telehealth) webpage.
- To read more on what Marketplace plans cover, visit the [HealthCare.gov](https://www.HealthCare.gov) webpage.





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Paid for by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Revision Date: March 2021

Publication # 12120

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