

NAVIGATING TELEHEALTH: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is telehealth?

Telehealth is a mode of health care that is delivered using video calls and other technology from home to connect with a health care provider. While it is not a new concept, it's popularity has increased significantly in the past few years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person visits were cancelled, and telehealth appointments were scheduled instead. In addition to doctor visits, telehealth also offers opportunities for educational resources such as disease management classes, nutrition counseling, and other health trainings.

What are the benefits of telehealth?

While some people may connect telehealth appointments only with COVID-19, they do offer several benefits outside of the pandemic as well. For people with limited mobility or who live far away from a medical provider, telehealth offers people the opportunity to speak with their provider from the comfort and convenience of their own home. Virtual visits are also convenient for people who have family caregivers. They can ask questions through the online portal rather than having to wait until an in-person appointment.



How to prepare for a telehealth appointment?

Telehealth may be daunting for some people who do not use technology often. However, with some practice and preparation the visit should go smoothly. Write down or add the date of the appointment in a calendar or somewhere it can be easily found. Before the appointment, make a list of all the questions or concerns so they're not forgotten and have a list of all current medications for reference. Be sure to use the best camera available, whether that's on your computer, smart phone, or tablet. Good quality cameras allow healthcare providers a clearer picture. Conduct a test run with the technology before the appointment. Make sure

the settings allow the use of the microphone and camera. Practice by calling a friend or family member. On the day of the appointment, make sure the device is fully charged and the telehealth visit takes place in a quiet location with good lighting. During the appointment, it may be helpful to have a caregiver or friend with you to take down notes or assist in other ways.

A prepared patient is an empowered patient. Being an empowered patient means a person has the confidence, ability, and opportunity to be actively involved in their health care. Speaking with a provider about concerns and medical history is an important step in managing one's health.

References:

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