

# Telehealth

## What You Should Know



### Telehealth

In today's world, technology is evolving more quickly than ever before. Just five years ago, ordering groceries through a mobile app and having them delivered to your front door was a novel concept. Today, wearable technology is the latest trend and promises to help you eat better, drink more water and even walk further. Technology is getting smarter every day.

When it comes to healthcare, the same is true. New strides are being made every day to bring patient-focused technology to doctor's offices, urgent care centers and emergency rooms. Also known as telemedicine, telehealth is fast becoming a popular way to see your doctor.

### What is Telehealth?

Telehealth visits are virtual office visits which let you video chat or remotely connect with your urologist or other health care provider in real-time via telephone, email, an online app or an online patient portal from the comfort of your home or wherever you are with internet access.

Your telehealth appointment is the same as your regular doctor's visit. The only difference is you will see and speak to your doctor via video conferencing or phone. If you have ever used FaceTime, it is very similar to how telehealth video conferencing works. Just speak normally as if you are having an in-person conversation. You will be able to clearly see and hear your doctor.

While most are, not all appointments are suitable for telehealth. If a careful physical examination is required or certain equipment is needed during the visit, an in-person visit may still be required.

### Are there Benefits to Telehealth?

There are many benefits to using telehealth. One of the main benefits is it can better connect patients to their providers, particularly those who live in rural areas or have a harder time traveling. Other benefits include:

- No transportation time or costs
- Less time in the waiting room
- Less chance of catching a new illness

### What to Expect during a Virtual Visit?

A telehealth appointment is very similar to what would happen in person.

- You will be given a scheduled appointment time.
- You will also be given a phone number or email link before your appointment, which will take you to an audio or computer check-in area.
- You will check in for your appointment by confirming your personal information, insurance, medications, allergies, etc. just like you would for an office visit, but you do it over the phone or electronically.
- When your urologist or provider is ready to see you, both parties are connected via video conference or phone so you can see and hear each other. Your urologist has your patient chart in front of them and can access your medical records just as if you were together in the office.
- During the appointment, you can discuss your symptoms, your recovery progress and any general concerns – just like you would during an in-person visit. And much like an in-person appointment, if you are more comfortable having a friend or family member join you, they can.



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- At the end of your appointment, your urologist or provider may prescribe a medication or discuss next steps for your care. You will also receive an after-visit summary through email or your patient portal, just like you normally would.

Because your privacy is very important, telehealth appointments often take place in rooms designed for in-person appointments. Your appointment is also not recorded. The equipment is all on a secure network which meets the same privacy and security standards as the telehealth equipment you find in a hospital.

When preparing for your appointment, here are some helpful telehealth technology tips to consider:

- Use a reliable device such as a smartphone, tablet, PC or laptop that allows for audio/video.
- Use a program, app, or website to connect with your healthcare provider.
- Make sure you have a solid internet connection or strong wifi connection.
- Consider using headphones or earbuds (not essential, but can be helpful with privacy and to block out noise).

Here are some other tips to help you prepare for your virtual visit.

- Before your appointment, find a private, quiet space with good lighting.
- Consider logging onto the program 10-15 minutes before your appointment. Sometimes your urologist's office may have you digitally complete some forms.
- Make sure to know what to do if you become disconnected from your urologist during the appointment. They may call you back if this happens, so it's important they have your correct contact information.
- Much like in-person visits, you may have to wait for your urologist to wrap up with the patient before you. If so, have a magazine or book you can read while you wait.

### About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic foundation – and the official foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make health changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts. To learn more, visit the Urology Care Foundation's website, **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions** or go to **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

### Disclaimer:

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or healthcare provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications. For more information, visit **UrologyHealth.org/Download** or call 800-828-7866.

