

Tips to Get the Most Out of Your TeleMedicine Appointment

Before you Schedule

- Check with your insurance to make sure you are covered for telemedicine appointments. Many insurance companies have recently agreed to cover these appointments.
- Make sure you have the necessary technology needed to participate in an appointment (laptop/desktop, tablet, or smart phone). Check with the physician's office to find out if you need to contact their IT (Information Technology) specialists ahead of time for a test run - this is often best done the day prior to your appointment. Directions for setting up for the appointment may depend on the type of device you are using. Ask your physician's office for a "help line" phone number if one is available.
- Take pictures of any visible symptoms so you can show the provider. You may want to upload these through the patient portal, if you use one to communicate with your physician. Rashes are often more easily seen on photos than "live" during the video appointment.

Set-up

- Find a place in your home where you can be comfortable speaking out loud and the internet connection is good.
- Ask people you live with to avoid going on the internet so your Wi-Fi connection is as good as possible. Close any other programs or applications so your Wi-Fi isn't over-taxed.
- It's important to make sure that you have proper lighting so the doctor can see you clearly - the light source should be in front of you.
- Make sure there are no visual or sound distractions in the background that would make it hard for you and your provider to focus.
- Make sure the device you are speaking on is fully charged before you start. Test out the audio, video before you get on. Be aware that you may need to "turn on" the audio and video after you are connected and in the meeting by clicking on icons, depending on the system and set up.
- You may want to wear headphones or earbuds to optimize sound quality.
- Write down all your questions /concerns in advance so you can get them answered during the appointment.
- If possible, ask someone to sit in with you to listen and take notes.

During the Appointment

- Be prepared to wait for the healthcare provider to get on the call. You may be placed in a virtual "waiting room."
- Try to make "eye contact" with your healthcare provider's face. Talk directly to him or her.
- Focus entirely on the appointment as if you were in the office: sit down and remain seated. Try to block out distractions and don't try to do two things at once like washing the dishes or wiping down groceries.
- Anticipate that you may still have to go into the office at a later date for lab tests, checking vitals, etc.

Telemedicine visits may become a vital part of how healthcare is provided going forward; meanwhile we hope these tips help you make the most of your time with your healthcare provider during this time when the safest visit is from home.