

TELEHEALTH: GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH TELEMEDICINE

Christopher T. Sneed, Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Lisa Washburn, Associate Professor, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Ann Berry, Professor, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Barbara Metzger, Extension Specialist, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Victoria Niederhauser, Dean and Professor, UT Knoxville College of Nursing

Karen Franck, Extension Associate Professor, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Telehealth might be new to you. Like many new things, telehealth can be intimidating at first. With a little preparation, you may find that telehealth is a valuable, convenient tool to take care of your health.

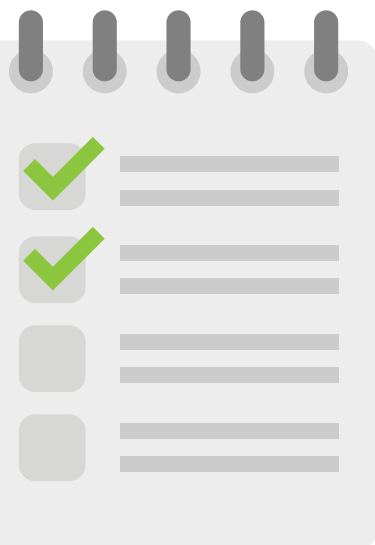


Suggestions to prepare for a telehealth or virtual visit are outlined below. Your health care provider may also give you information to help you prepare. Following these suggestions can help you get ready and feel comfortable before your appointment.

PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Choose a Spot – Find a quiet place in your home without distractions for your telehealth appointment. Choose an area with some privacy so you can talk freely with your health care team. Look for a place with good lighting. This will make it easier for your health care team to see you.

If you normally have someone with you during an in-person visit, that person should attend your virtual visit, too. This is very important, especially for older adults. This person can take notes or help you remember what the provider said. He or she may also be able to help you manage technology during your virtual visit.





Make Notes – Take time before your appointment to write down problems or questions you want to discuss with your health care provider. List your symptoms, their severity and how long they have lasted. These notes will help you remember important details for your appointment.

Get prepared – Review any emails or text messages sent by your health care provider. These messages may contain important information and instructions for accessing your virtual appointment.

Keep a notepad handy to jot down information. If possible, gather your medicine bottles or make a list of medicines. Include all over-the-counter medicines and vitamins or supplements you are taking.

Get comfortable – Choose a comfortable place in your house for your virtual visit. Wear loose clothing in case you need to show your health care provider something on your body. Try to reduce or tune out distractions in your surroundings.

Summarize your visit – At the end of your visit, go over your care plan with your health care provider. Make sure you fully understand all the information, lab tests, and/or medication refills you need. Ask if your health care provider has a system to provide a summary of your visit, including your care plan instructions.

Finally, if your health care provider requires a follow-up appointment in-person, write down any instructions. Bring the notes you took during the virtual visit to your in-person appointment.

GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE TECHNOLOGY

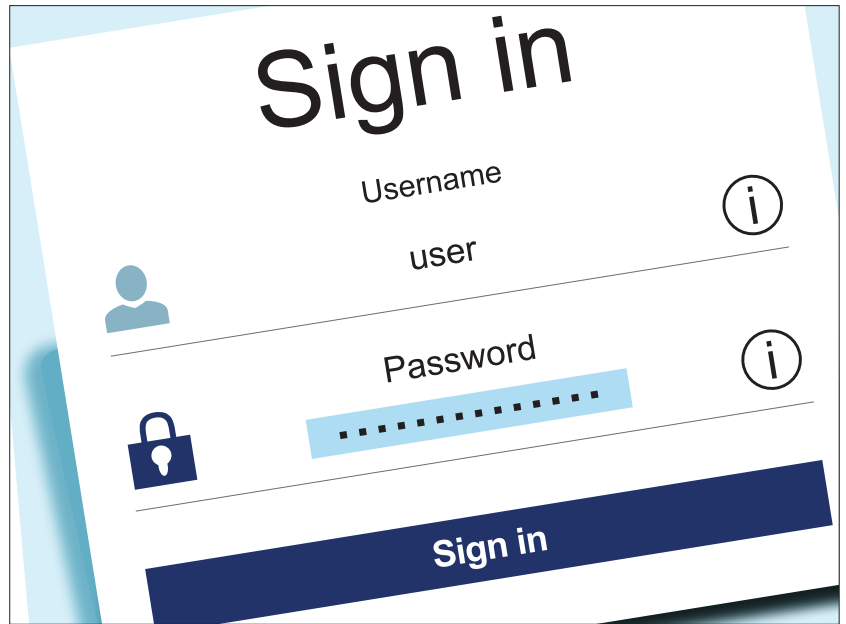
Before your appointment, your health care provider will give you instructions on how to access your virtual visit. This information may be mailed, emailed or texted to you. You will need to review this important information. You may also want to contact your health care provider for a phone number to call if you have technology challenges during the appointment.

Consider asking a computer savvy person to be nearby during your appointment. They can help you resolve any issues as you become familiar with the technology. This person can be a family member, friend, neighbor, etc.



As you get started:

- Visit the website for the telemedicine platform you will be using. Check to see if there are any special system requirements. Take time to watch any how-to videos shared on the website.
- Determine if you need to set up an account, username and password for the site or platform. Doing this in advance will save time and stress before your appointment.
- Make sure your camera and microphone are working.



- If you are accessing the telemedicine platform on a mobile device, check to see if you need to download any applications (apps).
- Check your internet connection to make sure it is working and is strong enough to operate the telemedicine platform. Check from the area in your home where you will do the virtual visit. Internet signals may be strong in one room and weaker in other parts of your home.

- If you will be using your phone's cellular data plan instead of an internet connection, make sure you have enough data to access the virtual platform and run any videos. Some wireless or cellular companies slow data speeds when you hit a data limit during your billing period. It is also a good idea to do any phone updates well in advance of your appointment.
- Finally, before your appointment, close all other programs and apps on your computer or phone. Open apps, like social media or email, may slow down your system. Open apps can also be distracting during your appointment. After all, no one wants to hear cell phone alerts in the middle of important medical conversations.



What to do if you have a technology problem

Technology can be great when it works properly. If you find yourself having technology problems:

Don't panic. People have problems with technology all the time. You are not the first patient to experience a technology issue!

Check your device. Make sure the device is plugged in and fully charged. Restart your computer or device.

Try again. Try connecting with a different device if you have one available.

Reach out. Call your doctor's office to speak with someone who can provide help. Contact information may be in the letter, email or text sent before your appointment. Call your health care provider's office if you have a longer than usual wait time for a virtual appointment.

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