

# Getting the Most Out of Your Telemedicine Therapy Visit

A lot changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a difficult time that made getting to doctor's appointments especially difficult. It also caused an increase in mental health challenges for many people and an increase in stress for just about everyone. But telemedicine -- which was around long before the pandemic -- has stepped up as an important tool to help you get the care and treatment you may need.

## What Is Telemedicine?

Telemedicine -- or telehealth -- is a real-time healthcare appointment with your doctor that typically uses audio and video via your smartphone, tablet, or computer. Telemedicine can be used for many different types of visits, but mental health care doctors and team members have found it to be particularly useful for visits with their patients. Having a therapy visit through a screen is not only commonplace, but many doctors and patients say they now actually prefer it to having a visit in person.

Types of telemedicine therapy visits can include:

- **Individual**, where you have a one-to-one session with your doctor
- **Group**, with family members or with a support group
- **Treatment for substance use disorder**, as part of a well-rounded approach to treatment

## Is Telemedicine Therapy for You?

Telemedicine might not be a good fit for everyone. But for some, it can be an important part of your treatment plan.

Some of the reasons that you and your doctor may want to use telemedicine can include:

- Convenience -- getting care from your home or another location, including when away
- Time -- cutting down on the amount of time spent traveling to appointments, off from work, or for childcare
- Scheduling -- there may be more days and times that work for both you and your doctor's schedules
- Privacy -- no waiting rooms or accidentally bumping into other people
- Kids -- many doctors, parents, and caregivers find that kids take well to telemedicine visits
- Access -- it may be easier to work with specialists, doctors who live far away, and different types of treatments
- Connecting -- there may be more opportunity to connect with others who share your experiences



## Tips for Your Telemedicine Therapy Visit

Before your first visit, talk to your doctor so you understand what to expect. There are also some steps you can take to get the most out of your sessions, such as:

- Treat your telemedicine appointment the same way you would an in-person visit -- be on time, dress appropriately, and focus on your session
- Know how the appointment will happen. Ask your doctor in advance how you will connect to them and if you'll receive a phone call, email with a link, or text message
- Make sure your equipment is charged or plugged in, your internet connection is good, and close out other apps on your device
- Be in a location that is quiet, comfortable, private, and free from too many distractions
- Have the right people there if it's a family or group visit. If the appointment is for a child, check with your doctor in advance to see if anyone else should be there
- Write down notes and questions to ask in advance, such as how you're feeling, what medicines you're taking, and if you're having any side effects



**Talk to your doctor to see if having telemedicine therapy appointments could be an option for you, and what you can do to get the most out of your appointments. Telemedicine therapy can be a valuable tool to help overcome the challenges and obstacles that may stand in the way of keeping appointments in today's world.**