

A Guide for Attending Appointments Virtually (by video or phone)

What is Telemedicine?

Telemedicine was adopted for healthcare professionals (HCPs) to evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients virtually over the phone or through a video-conferencing platform. Telemedicine can be more convenient and allows patients to be seen from the comfort of their own homes. This is especially useful for people with mobility issues or who live a long distance from their specialist.

This guide will cover the basics of telemedicine, including the technical aspects, how to prepare and what to bring to your virtual appointment.

TIP! Your appointment time is more of a "window". Allow flexibility and understand your HCP may be running ahead or behind.

Step 1: Confirm you have the right technology for a virtual appointment

- If your appointment is by video, you will need a computer, tablet, or phone with either a built-in camera or USB webcam.
- Follow your HCP's instructions and familiarize yourself with the platform ahead of time. You may need to download an app.
- Ensure you have a strong and secure internet connection.
- Fully charge your device.

TIP! In advance of your appointment, make sure you have the login details.



Step 2: Preparing for your virtual appointment

- Before** your appointment, ask others in your household to stop using any internet applications that could slow down your connection (i.e., streaming or gaming).
- Test your setting** in advance of the appointment to make sure your camera is level for your doctor to see your head and shoulders, and the lighting is good. For the best light, try to sit near a natural light source (facing the light vs having your back to the light).
- If you need to use your phone, make sure to prop the phone on a flat surface away from you.
- Connect** your device to the internet in advance and ensure the volume is set to loud or use headphones with a built-in microphone.
- If someone is joining you**, remember to let the HCP know and make sure both of you can be seen on camera.

TIP! Do not hold your phone or tablet in your hand. This is distracting to both you and your HCP.

Step 3: What to “bring” to your appointment

- A pen and notepad by your side
- Your updated headache diary/journal. If possible, send this to your HCP in advance.
- Any other information you may be tracking (ie. blood pressure readings, triggers etc).
- A list of all the medications and supplements you’ve taken/are taking (including dosages). You can obtain a print out from your pharmacist.
- Any recent lab results.
- A list of any questions or concerns you want to discuss including any specific goals you want to accomplish at this appointment (ie. a referral to an headache specialist or discussion about changing medications)

TIP! It is not uncommon to speak to a nurse practitioner, nurse, or even a resident before meeting with a specialist (especially for intake visits).

Step 4: During your Virtual Appointment

- Be seated and look directly at the screen. Don't walk around with your phone.
- Be focused on your appointment - close the door, turn the TV off, put your pet(s) in a different room, etc.
- If your HCP recommends any online resources, make a quick note to review the resource AFTERWARDS, and not during the appointment call, so as not to distract from your conversation.
- Speak a little slower and more loudly than normal to ensure you are heard. If you can't hear or don't understand what your HCP is saying, ask for them to repeat what was said.
- Consider a connection lag and try not to interrupt your HCP. Pause after speaking and be conscious of taking turns to speak.
- If you happen to get disconnected - don't panic. Try to reconnect through your computer. If it was a phone call, your HCP will call you back.
- Write down any advice, instructions, and answers to your questions or concerns.
- Ensure you understand what was discussed and next steps (i.e. prescription details, when you should book your next appointment).
- Ensure to disconnect the call.

TIP! If you can stream movies your connection is likely good enough.