



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS VIRTUAL HEALTH FOR PATIENTS

WHAT DOES VIRTUAL HEALTH MEAN? IS IT THE SAME AS TELEMEDICINE?

Virtual health, telehealth, and telemedicine all mean the same thing. These terms describe a patient using technology (computer, smartphone, or tablet, for example) to access their health care.

Technical Guidance

WHAT KIND OF EQUIPMENT DO I NEED TO HAVE A VIRTUAL HEALTH VISIT?

All you need is your phone, smartphone, tablet, or computer depending on the type of virtual visit. For a virtual video visit using a computer, you will need to ensure that your computer has video capability or that you have a web camera attached. Many people also prefer to use a headset for privacy.

I AM NOT GOOD WITH TECHNOLOGY. IS VIRTUAL HEALTH RIGHT FOR ME?

Absolutely! Patients of all ages and different experience levels with technology use virtual health to complete medical appointments. Virtual health visits can be as simple as receiving a phone call or as easy as using a mobile app like FaceTime or Skype.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM HAVING TECHNICAL PROBLEMS?

Confirm your provider has your phone number at the start of an appointment. If a technical problem occurs, your provider will contact you by phone to complete your visit.

Appointment Guidance

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Generally, there is no requirement to sign up for virtual services, but it is best to check with your military treatment facility (MTF). Your MTF staff may also wish to confirm that you have appropriate equipment to participate in virtual visits.

HOW CAN A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL CARE FOR ME WITHOUT SEEING ME IN PERSON?

Many health care interactions can be done virtually when a professional can see or speak with you. If a physical exam is needed, the health care professional may request that they see you in person.

WHAT TIME CAN I HAVE VIRTUAL HEALTH APPOINTMENT WITH MY PROVIDER?

Appointment times vary, much like in-person appointments. When scheduling your visit, staff will let you know if virtual appointments are available.

WHAT KIND OF SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE VIRTUALLY?

There are many different virtual health services, which include, but are not limited to:

- Primary care appointments (including items like medication refills, lab result reviews, contraceptive counseling, aches and pains, minor skin conditions, minor respiratory illness, and more)
- Behavioral health counseling appointments
- Follow-up appointments for surgeries or other procedures
- Appointments for many other medical and surgical specialties

Check with your MTF staff to see what conditions they treat virtually.

Insurance Guidance

WILL MY INSURANCE COVER A VIRTUAL HEALTH VISIT?

If you are a Department of Defense beneficiary receiving virtual health care from a military treatment facility professional, your virtual health visit is covered. To find out more about covered services for TRICARE, please visit <https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/Telemedicine>.

Privacy and Safety

IS VIRTUAL HEALTH SAFE?

Yes! Virtual health is a safe and effective way to extend the delivery of health care and limit the amount of time you spend traveling to the clinic or health care facility. Health care professionals are held to the same standards of care, privacy, and confidentiality as an in-person visit.

ARE VIRTUAL HEALTH VISITS RECORDED?

No. Virtual Health visits are never recorded without your direct consent. As with any clinical visit, a health care professional will document the visit in your electronic health record.

WHAT IF I TRY VIRTUAL HEALTH BUT I DO NOT LIKE IT?

Virtual health is a way of expanding your access to care options. If you find it is not for you, just let your provider know if you prefer to have an in-person visit.