



Child Neurology Foundation

Telehealth Tip Sheet

By now, you've probably heard of telehealth. It's the term for any healthcare accessed virtually — using video or a phone call.

You may now be wondering if telehealth is the right option for you and your child. It can feel awkward or uncomfortable because you're not used to it. But to help you make your decisions and make telehealth appointments as successful as possible for you and your family, we put together this list of tips to help you prepare for your appointment.

1 Familiarize yourself with your provider's telehealth system. When you make your appointment with your child's provider, verify that you are set up with their office's patient portal. Most offices use this for all communication and sign-on procedures related to telehealth appointments.

2 Do a tech check. If you're using video chat, check your Internet connection before the visit starts. If you're having trouble connecting, try moving to a different room that's closer to your wireless router. If you're using a computer, you can also try connecting to the Internet using an ethernet cable. Some clinicians told us this summer that if you hold this visit in your car on your phone, you're distracted. If you're showing up to the appointment this way because of connectivity issues, tell your provider at the beginning of the appointment.

3 Do a test run. If you're attending your child's telehealth appointment via video, try a test run beforehand. You'll receive a link for the call in your patient portal or email. You can click that to test both your audio and video. Turn your video camera on to check that lighting is good and that your microphone is working. If you're using a phone or tablet, find a place that you can prop it up, so that your hands can be free during your appointment. This will allow you to help your health care provider examine your child by video if they need to.

4 Make sure that your child is present for the visit and that you are the legal guardian. This is important because permission to do the video visit can only be made by a child's legal guardian. If you can't be in the visit, you need to provide consent for another adult (such as a grandparent, adult sibling, etc.) to attend on your behalf.

5 Consider who else may be able to participate in the telehealth visit with you. Are there other caregivers in your home that could join the video or call to provide their insight into your child's care? Some people have siblings or spouses join the visit to provide their perspective. If it's available to you, you could also consider if you could have someone responsible for watching the other children in the house while you're on the call.

6 Have a back-up plan. Sometimes an online video connection may be unreliable. If possible, have a phone nearby so you can switch to a phone call if needed.



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7 Be prepared to discuss your medication supply and what you will need refills on. Write down a list of your child's medication, including dosage, and the amounts you have on-hand before your appointment.

8 If you do not live in the same state as your provider, or are taking the visit from somewhere besides your home, ask if they are able to treat the patient before your appointment. States all have different rules about who providers can treat out of state.

9 Write down any questions you have for the provider before the visit. Identify the most important ones so you can prioritize those during the visit. Consider whether some questions could be sent through your patient portal or answered by the nurse or medical assistant either before or after the telehealth visit. This can help save time while allowing your biggest concerns to be addressed with your child's doctor during the actual visit. Remember, you are an integral part of the care team for your child, and collaboration with your child's doctor during all visits (including telehealth) is valued.

10 Remember you are your child's biggest advocate. And that doesn't change when the visit switches to telehealth. Don't be afraid to ask questions about why your child's provider may be asking you to bend your child's limbs in a particular way or encourage reflexes. Likely, they require your help for your child's physical exam. Speak up whenever you feel uncomfortable with something you're asked to do; it's a learning opportunity for both you and your child's provider!

11 Ask your provider about their billing process for telehealth. Telehealth is new to many organizations and some are still putting together a billing process with insurance companies. However, because of physical distancing measures, many companies are also being more flexible with telehealth than they have been in the past.

12 Providers are still here for you! Even though you may not be able to see them in person, they still want to give you and your child the best care possible. Do not hesitate to reach out to them with your questions and concerns.

The CNF Telehealth Tip Sheet was originally created in 2020 and updated October 2021.

Check out our Telehealth Hub for more resources at
www.childneurologyfoundation.org/telehealth/