



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Frequently Asked Questions about Telehealth

Updated April 23, 2020

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is working to ensure that Marylanders still get needed services safely.

Medicare, Medicaid and other insurance providers have put in place temporary telehealth changes to address access to care and social distancing during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Everyone, but especially those in high-risk groups, should consider telehealth to reduce the risk of exposure or exposing others to COVID-19. If a telehealth visit doesn't meet your health care needs, you may leave your home for medical care while Maryland's stay at home order is in place.

The best way to know if your health care provider offers telehealth services is to call your health care provider.

Service coverage and costs for telehealth services vary by insurer. Many have waived or reduced copays and deductibles during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Check with your insurer.

If you have a medical emergency, call 911.

How does telehealth work?

Telehealth uses technology to allow patients and providers in separate locations to have a real time virtual office visit. The technology can include audio-video conferencing services, video chat using FaceTime, Facebook Messenger video chat, Google Hangouts video, Zoom or Skype, or a telephone-only call.

What are the changes to telehealth to address COVID-19?

Temporary changes to telehealth regulations include allowing a patient to receive telehealth services in their own home or any other private location as agreed upon you and your health care

provider. Another is to allow telephone-only telehealth “visits.”

How do I get a telehealth appointment?

You can contact your health care provider to schedule a telehealth visit like you would an office visit. You may also check with your insurer.

What should I do to get ready for a telehealth visit?

- Write down your questions
- Make a list of your symptoms
- Note when your symptoms started and if they have changed
- Be ready to verify your identity
- Be ready to talk to your provider from a quiet, private place
- Consider trying a “visit” with someone else using the same device and location for your telehealth visit to assure everything works
- Be ready and able to answer when your provider calls for your scheduled telehealth visit

Your provider may call from a number other than their office. Caller ID may show “Unknown Caller,” “Private,” “Blocked” or “No Caller ID.” Be sure to answer the call at your appointment time.

Is telehealth secure?

Privacy and security depend on the service or video chat that you and your provider use. Your provider must explain the telehealth service to you and any privacy or security limitations.

Are there any apps that providers should not use for a telehealth visit?

You should not use an app that is public facing like Facebook Live, Twitch or TikTok. These apps do not protect your privacy.

Do telehealth services have any consent requirements?

Your provider must get your consent for telehealth services and note it in your medical record. You may give verbal consent. A parent or guardian may give consent.

Are all telehealth services available by telephone only?

A provider can evaluate medical devices, refer you to health care services, provide treatment and

issue most prescriptions. However, some services are not eligible for telephone-only telehealth. Some examples of services that are not eligible for telephone only visits include physical therapy services, occupational therapy services and speech language services. Ask your insurer or provider what services are available.

Where can I find information on my insurer's telehealth options?

You can use the links below to visit each insurers website for more information about telehealth during the COVID-19 outbreak. Or, call the number on your member ID card.

[Medicare](#)

[Aetna](#)

[CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield](#)

[Cigna](#)

[UnitedHealthcare](#)

For Medicaid HealthChoice, use the links below to visit each insurer's website.

[Aetna Better Health of Maryland](#)

[Amerigroup](#)

[Jai Medical Systems](#)

[Kaiser Permanente](#)

[Maryland Physicians Care](#)

[MedStar Family Choice](#)

[Priority Partners](#)

[United Healthcare Community Plan](#)

[University of Maryland Health Partners](#)