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Telehealth and MaineCare *July 2020*

Your health care or mental health provider may offer telehealth as a way for you to receive MaineCare-covered services. Check with your health care provider today to find out if you can see them from the comfort of your own home.

What is telehealth? Telehealth is the use of technology for health care appointments and services. It allows you to “see” your care provider without going to their office. Visits are covered by MaineCare, Medicare, and most insurance companies.

What kinds of appointments can I have using telehealth? Many MaineCare-covered services can be delivered through telehealth, including:

- Conversations with your doctor about your chronic health care, diagnosis and treatment of new illnesses, and other medical care
- Physicals, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, and some developmental disability services
- Routine child check-ups and developmental screenings

How do I use telehealth? There are options for how you can use telehealth, such as:

- Mobile apps, like MD Live, FaceTime, WhatsApp, video chat, and Skype
- Video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or WebEx
- Patient portal messages and phone calls (without video)

How do I ask for a telehealth appointment?

Call your provider and ask if you can use telehealth for your appointment or your child’s appointment.



Do I have to use telehealth to see a doctor?

If it is an emergency, go to the Emergency Department. While many doctors are seeing patients in person, you lower your risk of being exposed to COVID-19 by using telehealth for non-emergency care.

What if I don’t have a smartphone or internet access? When you call your doctor, they will discuss options for your appointment. If you don’t have a smartphone but have a computer, you may be able to have a telehealth visit that way. If you don’t have a computer or internet access, you may be able to have your appointment over the phone. If you need help with paying for your phone, cell minutes, or internet access, you can also apply for [Lifeline](#), a federal program that helps eligible individuals pay for their minutes and internet access.

How much data will this use? Some face-to-face video chats can use a lot of data, but if you use Wi-Fi, it can reduce the amount you use. If you have a limited amount of data, call your doctor's office and discuss your options. They may have options that don't use as much data, such as a phone call or text. You can also contact your phone carrier if you have questions about your data limits.



What if I need an interpreter? An interpreter can help during a telehealth visit, like they do during an in-person appointment. Your provider's office will contact you before your telehealth appointment to talk about what you need for the appointment and may ask if you need an interpreter. If they don't ask, you can request one. If your provider doesn't call or email you before your visit, call the office to request an interpreter. Your

provider will arrange to have the interpreter join your telehealth visit. You will see both your provider and your interpreter on your screen. If you are receiving care at a hospital or health clinic, the interpreter may join you in person or from another location. You can also talk with your provider about having your family member or friend as an interpreter if you prefer.

How can I be sure it's safe to use telehealth? You should always be careful when using technology, whether it's for health care, banking, or connecting with family and friends. Your privacy is very important to us and your health care provider. There are some simple things you can do to help make sure that your telehealth visit is safe and secure:



- Ask your provider if the technology they are using is HIPAA-compliant. This means that it meets the federal government's strict privacy and security standards. HIPAA-compliant technologies make it more difficult for hackers to access your information.
- Make sure you are in a private space before you start your telehealth visit and be sure your provider is also in a private space once you are connected. A room with a door that can be closed is best to avoid interruptions and prevent others from hearing your discussion.
- Use a private network to connect to the internet. This is one that requires a password to join, such as your home network. Don't use public networks like those at coffee shops or libraries. Such networks are much less secure, and your information may be at risk.

Questions? For more information, all MaineCare Member Services at 1-800-977-6740. TTY users dial 711.