



COVID-19

The Benefits of Telehealth

A safe and effective way to access healthcare during the coronavirus pandemic.

What is telehealth?

Telehealth, telemedicine, or other related terms refer to how healthcare providers and clinicians can provide care for patients remotely when the provider and patient are not able to meet with each other in person. Modern technology allows doctors to care for patients by using video-conferencing tools.

Why is it important to consider telehealth as a way to help stop the spread of COVID-19?

The rapid spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has created an urgency to expand the use of technology to help people who have chronic illnesses and need routine care get access to their healthcare providers. Telehealth can keep you connected to your ESRD care team and other important healthcare providers, while limiting your physical exposure to other patients and clinical staff. It gives you access to your healthcare team from the safety and comfort of your home, reduces transportation challenges, and limits your risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Who can provide you with healthcare services through telemedicine?

A range of providers that includes doctors, nurse practitioners, registered dietitians, licensed clinical social workers and mental health providers are able to offer telehealth as long as it's appropriate for you!

Am I eligible to receive care through telemedicine?

Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries are able to receive a number of approved services via telehealth through new CMS Waivers in place for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many other private insurance programs also have telehealth approved services. To verify if your health insurance covers services through telehealth, call the number on the back of your insurance card or talk with your healthcare team.



What are some of the services I may receive?

Below is a list of services that your health insurance may cover. For information about specific services, please consult with your insurance company.

In-Center Hemodialysis

- You may receive a virtual visit from your kidney doctor or other healthcare providers while you are receiving your dialysis treatment at your facility. You may also be asked to participate in a virtual plan-of-care meeting. In these cases, your facility might provide the technology needed, such as a computer or device that will allow you to have a virtual, live conversation with your healthcare provider.

Home Hemodialysis or Peritoneal Dialysis

- If you dialyze at home, you may be asked to attend a virtual visit with your kidney doctor or other care providers.

Kidney Transplant

- Some transplant centers are continuing kidney transplant evaluations through virtual appointments. Connect with your center to talk about what virtual options are available.

General Care

- You can request a virtual visit with your primary care provider or other specialists.



What equipment will I need?

If you are receiving in-center hemodialysis, you may not require equipment of your own to connect virtually with your dialysis care providers; your facility might help you connect. However, if you dialyze at home or you are trying to schedule an appointment with other non-dialysis providers, you may require some items from the list below to receive telehealth:

- Internet connection
- Computer, tablet, laptop, or phone with teleconference capabilities

Will I need to install applications?

- You may need to install applications on your device that will allow video or teleconference functions
- Some free applications that are being used during the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- » Skype <https://www.skype.com/en/>
- » Google Meetings <https://meet.google.com/>
- » WhatsApp <https://www.whatsapp.com/>
- » FaceTime <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/facetime>
- » Amwell <https://amwell.com/cm/>

