



Tips for telehealth

While its arrival was swift and sudden, telehealth is likely to be here to stay. According to a recent survey, conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of Johnson & Johnson MedTech, more than four-fifths of Americans surveyed (81%) say they would be comfortable using telehealth to manage their care.¹ Interestingly, nearly half of the Americans surveyed who discussed telehealth options with a healthcare professional due to COVID-19 (47%) would be more likely to schedule a surgery or medical procedure if telehealth were an option before or after the procedure.¹

Telehealth may also provide an opportunity for healthcare professionals and patients to discuss the surgeries or medical procedures they may have deferred during the time of COVID-19: almost four in 10 Americans surveyed (39%) say the option to stay connected with their healthcare professional via telehealth before or after the procedure would make them more likely to schedule a needed surgery or medical procedure.¹

Having a clear roadmap through the new telehealth paradigm is key to the ability of healthcare professionals to offer it as a viable care option, and to the ability of patients to have confidence that their care needs can be met by it.

Here are some tips from the American Hospital Association to help you maximize telehealth's potential:

- Let your patients know what healthcare needs can be met via telehealth. Can you refill prescriptions, monitor chronic health issues, and order lab work? Let them know with a text, email, or phone call.²
- Help your patients feel at ease with upcoming telehealth appointments with personal outreach, including:
 - Consider sending emails or text messages ahead of an appointment with user-friendly instructions for using the telehealth system.²
 - Consider calling the patient in advance of their appointment to assess vitals, verify medications, and ensure the patient is prepared for the telehealth appointment.²
- Demonstrate proper “websites manner” by actively listening and demonstrating verbal sentiments of care with a warm tone.³
- Consider using applications that allow for video chats (like Apple FaceTime®, Facebook Messenger® video chat, Google Hangouts® video, or Skype®) to help communicate.²
- Ensure that healthcare professionals are trained to use the virtual tools in the office, including patient portals, monitoring tools, and messaging apps.²

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed healthcare, but telehealth can help in adapting to meet patients' needs.

References

1. Johnson & Johnson Medical Devices Companies Elective Surgery Survey. Accessed August 4, 2020. About the Survey: This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of DePuy Synthes, part of the Johnson & Johnson Medical Devices Companies from July 9-13, 2020 among 2,016 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.
2. American Hospital Association. “COVID-19: Telehealth and Virtual Care Best Practices.” Accessed September 1, 2020. Available at: https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2020/04/COVID-19-Telehealth-Best-Practices_final.pdf.
3. American Academy of Family Physicians. “10 communication tips for physician phone visits during COVID-19.” Accessed September 1, 2020. Available at: https://www.aafp.org/journals/fpm/blogs/inpractice/entry/telephone_visit_tips_2.html.