

UW Medicine

Telemedicine to Home for Your Mental Health Care: What it is and what to expect

What is telemedicine?

Telemedicine allows you to visit with your health care provider using video-teleconferencing or “tele-video” technology (similar to Skype or Facetime).

What are the benefits of telemedicine for me?

- Telemedicine provides the opportunity to communicate directly with a health care provider without traveling to their office.
- Telemedicine may provide better access to specialty care.
- Telemedicine may be more convenient for you and/or may reduce your wait time to see a clinician.

Can I participate in a telemedicine visit?

- Your provider will determine if telemedicine is an option for you, based on clinical factors and medical regulations.
- After the initial visit, he/she will also determine whether more telemedicine appointments are appropriate.
- To participate, you will need a computer, tablet or smart phone that has a camera and a microphone, and a high speed internet connection.
- **You must be located in the state of Washington at the time of the visit**

Is participation in telemedicine voluntary?

- Yes, participation in telemedicine visits is voluntary.
- If you do not wish to participate, please inform the clinic as soon as possible.
- Declining a telemedicine appointment does not affect your right to care or treatment.

What are the risks of telemedicine services?

- If technical difficulties arise, or if an in-person visit is still necessary, you could experience a delay in treatment or be inconvenienced.
 - For example, if a controlled substance, such as Valium or Ritalin, is to be prescribed, the law requires an in-person appointment with your provider first.

What about privacy issues?

- Telemedicine communications are generally very secure. You and your UW provider will connect using a secure log-in link. The electronic communications are encrypted. There is an unlikely possibility of breach of patient privacy due to unforeseen failure of security protocols.
- You are responsible to participate in the telemedicine visit in a location that you feel is private, confidential, and safe.

What should I expect?

- Before the visit:
 - You will be scheduled for the telemedicine visit.
 - UW Medicine uses a videoconferencing platform called “Zoom”. Prior to your scheduled telemedicine visit you will be sent your secure log-in “Zoom” link that you will use on the day of your visit. Please see the attached information about using Zoom.
 - You will need a private location with internet access and a computer with camera and a microphone/speaker.
 - Be sure your device is plugged in or fully charged. Set the camera at eye-level, and use headphones if you need privacy or are hearing impaired.
 - Have the clinic phone number handy in case of any questions or concerns: _____
- On the day of the telemedicine visit:
 - Please treat this appointment as you would a visit to the clinic: dress appropriately, turn off cell phones, TV's, etc., do not engage in other activities during the sessions (e.g., emailing, on internet, cooking, cleaning, eating, etc.); and please do not smoke or drink during the session, or attend while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - Unless this is a planned couples or family visit, please be sure you are alone in a confidential space.
 - Please use your computer to join the Zoom link 15 minutes prior to the scheduled visit and wait for your health care provider to open the appointment.
 - Once your health care provider joins the Zoom link, no one else will join during your telemedicine visit.
 - Your provider will introduce him/herself and anyone in the room with him/her, and will ask you to identify yourself, and anyone in the room with you.
 - You will be asked to provide your location and telephone number as part of our technical failure and safety protocols.
 - Your visit will not be recorded and we ask that you also do not record the visit.
- After the telemedicine visit:
 - Once the visit is completed, it will be documented in your UW medical record similarly to an in-person visit.
 - A bill for this service will be generated and submitted for payment from you or your insurance carrier. As with in-person health care visits, you will be responsible for any deductibles, copays or unpaid balances.

Questions?

- Your questions are important to us. Please call your provider or clinic if you have questions or concerns.