TELEHEALTH TIPS

In the age of COVID-19 and because of recent advances in technology, Telehealth Medicine has become increasingly necessary and popular. It provides both convenience and safety to patients, providers and their staff. Despite its advantages, telehealth also has its challenges.

When challenges occur with telehealth appointments they are often due to technology, the results of which can be frustrating for everyone. There are many people that are so intimidated by technology that they put off or even refuse to schedule needed appointments. When they are scheduled and tech becomes an issue, appointments can be plagued with glitches and delays. Encounters can be so problematic that they result in missed appointments, which carry fees for patients that cost as much as $75 per occurrence. These fees are not covered by Medicare or other insurances and can be devastating to those on limited incomes who have to pay them out of pocket.

Here are some tips that can help patients and medical staff avoid adverse situations related to telehealth appointments.

Before the Appointment

1 Practice using the technology prior to the appointment. Set up a mock meeting with the staff or a family member to ensure the technology works before you actually need it to.

2 Talk to your provider or their staff about a pre-appointment check-in to ensure that all parties are ready, available and on time for the appointment. This could be as simple as a pre-appointment phone call or text message to confirm that everyone is prepared.

3 Consult with your provider or their staff about a contingency plan in case there are glitches on the day of the appointment. This could be achieved by providing a secondary phone number or contact method to connect if technical difficulties arise or the primary connection route simply doesn't work.
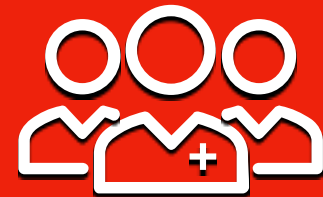
During the Appointment

1 Be sure you are in a private setting where the details of the appointment will not be overheard by other parties and others know not to disturb you during that time.

2 If its a video appointment, make sure you're in a well lit space so that you can clearly see the people on video and people on the video can clearly see you.

3 Turn off the television, radio or other devices that may disturb or disrupt the appointment or lower the quality of sound on either end.

After the Appointment

1 Ensure you properly and completely disconnect or turn off the meeting technology prior to engaging in any personal conversations or activities.

2 Be sure to follow all of the advice and instructions from you medical professionals and staff as it relates to your health, prescriptions and appointments.

While these tips may not eliminate all telehealth issues, taking these steps can greatly reduce the likelihood of appointment mishaps.

SMP
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