

## RESOURCE GUIDE

# Telemedicine FAQs for Patients

TEXLA TELEHEALTH RESOURCE CENTER &  
THE F. MARIE HALL INSTITUTE FOR  
RURAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH



## ABOUT TEXLA TRC

*The TexLa Telehealth Resource Center at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center provides technical assistance, outreach, and education to advance telehealth across Louisiana and Texas. TexLa is a proud partner of the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers.*



**Web:** [www.texlatrc.org](http://www.texlatrc.org)

**Email:** [texlatrc@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:texlatrc@ttuhsc.edu)

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As a patient, you may be considering telemedicine or telehealth services or your doctor or health care provider may wish to provide you with services via telemedicine. At TexLa TRC, we understand that patients have many questions regarding telemedicine services, including how to access services, what to expect, and how to ensure you receive proper care. The sections below address these frequently asked questions and are meant to provide you with information you can use when considering a telemedicine consultation.

### What is telemedicine?

Telemedicine refers to the remote diagnosis and treatment of patients by licensed physicians, or those acting under the delegated authority of licensed physicians, using telecommunication technology when the physician and the patient are not in the same physical location. Think of telemedicine as clinical care from a distance. Usually, the provider and patient use technology that allows a live audio-video visit (like a video chat).

### Why telemedicine?

Healthcare providers may have a number of reasons to offer telemedicine services. Telemedicine provides patients with access to care that may be unavailable otherwise. Telemedicine can save time, save fuel to drive to an appointment, and may offer faster treatment or follow-up.

### What if I can't do a video visit?

If a patient is unable to participate in a video visit for whatever reason, there may be other options. The availability of a visit without video may depend on insurance, the provider, and the type of care that is needed. Inform your provider if you are unable to participate in a video visit and ask them if a visit by phone or patient portal is an option for you.

### Why can't I have in-person appointments with my provider?

Patients always have the right to receive services in person. Telemedicine can provide access to some services are not available in person due to public health issues, natural disasters, or other constraints. Always talk to your provider about your options.

### How do I connect virtually with my physician or other provider?

When telemedicine services are available, the provider should offer instructions for how to connect. Smart phones, tablets, or computers may be used. Once connected, the patient may be placed in a virtual waiting room until the provider connects. Though technical difficulties are not anticipated, they can happen and disrupt a telemedicine visit. Discuss how disruptions should be handled with your provider.