Telemedicine Patient Education

**What is telemedicine?**

Telemedicine allows patients to receive care by a medical specialist, who may be located in another city or area of the country, without having to travel to see them in person. Patients experience real-time visits with medical professionals by using a computer and special electronic equipment. The computer is specifically designed with a camera and audio so the specialist and you can talk.

**Who determines if a telemedicine visit is needed?**

Your primary care clinician will determine if a specialist is needed. The clinician and/or medical staff will schedule a time for the specialist to meet with you and will be present during the visit with the specialists.

**Why telemedicine?**

Many patients have challenges traveling to clinics, hospitals, or other healthcare facilities for a variety of reasons. Telemedicine allows patients/families another way of receiving quality care in a safe and personalized method.

**What occurs prior to the telemedicine visit?**

Prior to the telemedicine visit, your health history is shared with the specialist, such as lab results, x-rays and other test results. This allows the specialist time to review the information.

The referring clinician and/or medical staff will give you an opportunity to view a patient education video that will demonstrate a telemedicine visit that takes place in a hospital setting. The example in the video is similar to a telemedicine visit that takes place in a clinic setting. The only difference is the visit will be located in an exam room in the clinic.

**What occurs during the telemedicine visit?**

The local clinician or a staff member will set up the telemedicine equipment within the hospital room or clinic exam room. They will explain the equipment to you and answer your questions. You will be asked if you need to use the bathroom and make sure you’re comfortable prior to beginning the visit. This will allow for a more relaxed visit with the specialist.

Once the specialist is connected, you will be introduced. For your safety and privacy, the specialist will ask you to state your name and provide your date of birth. For the physical exam, the local clinician or medical staff member will use special pieces of equipment, such as a special stethoscope, which allows the specialist to hear your heart and lung sounds. If the specialist must get a closer look, they will be able to zoom in the camera. They have the ability to take photos, too, but (for example: a skin rash) you will be told if and when this will occur.

The specialist will develop a plan of care and explain it to you. He/she may ask you to repeat back in your own words the plan of care to confirm your understanding. The local clinician and specialist will be in contact with each other as needed.

**What will the telemedicine visit cost?**

It is important to check with your insurance company to verify specific coverage and co-pays associated with the Telemedicine visit. Your insurance will be billed similar to in person visit. If you have any questions please ask.

To view the educational video: http://www.affinityhealth.org/Affinity/Services/Telemedicine.htm

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