

Medicare Telehealth Coverage

What is telehealth?

Telehealth includes certain services that you receive from a health care provider outside of an in-person office visit. A telehealth service is a full visit with a provider using telephone or video technology that allows for both audio and video communication.

Examples of Medicare-covered telehealth benefits include:

- Lab test or x-ray result consultations
- Post-surgical follow-up
- Prescription management
- Preventive health screenings
- Urgent care issues like colds, coughs, and stomach aches
- Mental health treatment, including online therapy and counseling
- Treatment of recurring conditions, like migraines or urinary tract infections
- Treatment of skin conditions



Ask your doctor about telehealth options and whether it is suitable for your health care needs.

Virtual check-in vs. Telehealth visit

Virtual check-ins allow you to communicate with your doctor through audio and video communication technology or by sending photo or video images for remote assessment. Your doctor can respond by phone, secure text messaging, email, or use of a patient portal. **Unlike a telehealth visit, a virtual check-in is not a full appointment.** Medicare covers both virtual check-ins and telehealth visits.

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Expanded coverage

In the past, Medicare's coverage of telehealth was very limited. During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, however, telehealth coverage was temporarily expanded to allow more people to get care from their homes. These flexibilities have been extended through December 31, 2027. Until then, telehealth services are:



Covered for all beneficiaries in any geographic area, at home in addition to health care settings

- In the past only Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas could access telehealth



Generally provided via an interactive, two-way audio and video technology

- Limited services can be provided using audio only (like behavioral health care services, counseling and therapy from an opioid treatment program, or patient evaluation and management)



Provided by any health care professional that is eligible to bill Medicare

- You can get covered telehealth from a broader range of providers

Contact your Medicare Advantage plan if you have questions about its coverage and costs related to telehealth services.

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What is remote patient monitoring?

Remote patient monitoring (RPM) is the ability for health care providers to track aspects of person's health outside of traditional clinical settings, like a patient's home. RPM can reduce the need for in-person visits, cut down on travel costs, and limit exposure to illness, which can be especially helpful for people with chronic conditions or mobility challenges. Providers may collect data like heart rate, blood glucose, blood pressure, or breathing rate, and then use it to help manage conditions and guide treatment decisions between visits.

Things to know: RPM appropriate use and potential fraud

Although RPM can be a useful part of care, there are cases where services may be offered without clear medical need, explained incompletely, or billed in ways that do not reflect the level of care provided. In some situations, this may rise to the level of fraud; in others, it may involve overuse or misunderstandings about consent and billing.



Patients may be contacted by companies through phone calls, online ads, or television promotions offering RPM services or devices. While some of these offers are legitimate, others may be misleading, especially if they emphasize "free" products or request personal or Medicare information without involving the patient's regular provider. Look out for the following potential fraud or scam warning signs:

- You see charges on your Medicare statements for remote (physiologic or therapeutic) monitoring you didn't need, you didn't get, you didn't agree to, or that were from a provider you do not know.
- You are offered a "free" device that tracks your daily steps, like a smartwatch, in exchange for your Medicare number or other personal information.
- You are told RPM services are free to Medicare beneficiaries and then RPM services are billed to Medicare.
- Your doctor's office calls to ask how you are doing. Later, you notice they billed the phone call to Medicare as an RPM service.

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Who to contact for more information:

- Speak with your doctor or other health care provider to learn about telehealth and remote patient monitoring services they offer and if they may be appropriate for your health care needs.
- Contact your SHIP if you have questions about Medicare’s telehealth coverage.
- Contact your SMP if you think you experienced potential Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse.

Local SHIP contact information	Local SMP contact information
SHIP toll-free:	SMP toll-free:
SHIP email:	SMP email:
SHIP website:	SMP website:
To find a SHIP in another state: Call 877-839-2675 (and say “Medicare” when prompted) or visit www.shiphelp.org	To find an SMP in another state: Call 877-808-2468 or visit www.smpresource.org

SHIP Technical Assistance Center: 877-839-2675 | www.shiphelp.org | info@shiphelp.org
 SMP Resource Center: 877-808-2468 | www.smpresource.org | info@smpresource.org
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