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Telemedicine appointment urgent care

Image Getty Images There are more than 10,000 medical clinics that have been shot across the country. These offer the possibility of a shorter waiting time and a cheaper bill. The only hitch: Not all clinics are created equal. They range from facilities for nurses to detached ERs. Stumble into the first type, and you may be out of a co-pay before being sent elsewhere to get an X-ray. The second type can be just as expensive as a hospital ER, even if your problem is relatively small. This way you make the right choice for your health and wallet. First, call your doctor. If you are not facing a life-threatening emergency, give your own doctor a phone call: You are amazed at the hours your GP keeps. In a survey of GPs, 72% of them offered same-day appointments for urgent matters, and 45% had extended the hours outside the standard from 9 to 5. We don't want you up all night because you have a bladder infection or a kid crying with earache, said Robert Wergin, MD, president-elect of the American Academy of Family Physicians. If you don't reach your doctor and you're worried that the situation could be dire, you have three choices outside the FIRST There: 1. For life-threatening problems... Freestanding emergency centers are open 24/7, so they're a blessing in a real crisis if there's no hospital nearby or you want to avoid a long wait. The ER doctors on staff can deal with severe fractures and life-threatening problems such as uncontrolled bleeding, heart attacks, strokes, and poisonings. They even help give birth to a child. (And if they can't handle your problem, they can transfer you to a hospital.) While co-pays have changed, they are about \$75 to \$100, although your total bill may be much higher; you wouldn't want to go to any of these centers for conditions that can be treated elsewhere. They usually accept insurance, but check to make sure the one you're on your way to takes your specific plan. One caveat: While almost all freestanding ERs - such as hospital-ERs - will treat everyone regardless of coverage, some may turn away from the uninsured. RELATED: 7 Pains You Should Never Ignore » 2. For serious injuries... Emergency care clinics are usually staffed by a combination of MDs, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners, and they can deal with serious - but not life-threatening - problems such as sprains, strains, and minor fractures (most have imaging equipment). The staff on hand can also deal with mild allergic or asthmatic reactions, infections and animal bites; stitch up cuts; and prescribe any medication you might need. These clinics are open at least 10 to 12 hours a day, six to seven days a week; co-pays are about \$35 to \$75 (although again, you check if the clinic accepts your insurance). 3. For small worries... Retail clinics can often be found in pharmacies and big-box stores like Walmart, and they are usually staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants who are monitored by a one Md. The clinics provide wellness care, such as vaccinations, physicals, and blood tests, but they can also come in handy if you don't get in to see a doctor for a worrisome rash, a questionable cut, a small burn, an earache, or persistent colds or flu symptoms. You will notice that the hours vary, but the clinics are usually open 10 to 12 hours a day. Co-pays are in the \$15 to \$30 range - but make sure you confirm that your insurance is accepted. Go straight to an ER if you: A serious injury to life or limbs - especially one that triggers a feeling of anxiety or mischief, say doctors. The body releases substances such as stress chemicals after you have suffered severe trauma, so do not ignore that feeling. Problems that can cause this feeling include: • Heart attack • Stroke • A severe allergic reaction • High fever with a stiff neck • Sudden, severe abdominal pain Is it an emergency? Sometimes you are faced with a condition that is not minor (i.e. treatable in a retail clinic) nor an obvious emergency. The chart below can help you decide whether you need urgent care or the ER: Getty Images Sources: David Weitzman, MD, American Academy of Urgent Care Medicine/Todd Taylor, MD, spokesman for the American College of Emergency Physicians NEXT: What to Have in Your Emergency Kit » This content was created and maintained by a third party, and imported on this page to help users access their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content on piano.io We have all been in a place where a prescription or medical advice was needed, but a visit to the doctor's office just didn't seem worth it. With telemedicine, you are able to get the guidance and prescriptions you need for common ailments without leaving your home. Recently, Clark Howard shared his experience with telemedicine and his ability to take the place of a personal doctor visit for routine medical needs. In this article, we'll take a look at five things you need to know about telemedicine before making your first remote appointment. Table of Contents What is Telemedicine? Telemedicine is a subset of telehealth, which basically includes any electronic transfer of medical information. In particular, telemedicine allows patients, doctors and experts to communicate online to discuss symptoms, diagnose and/or write a prescription. In simpler terms, telemedicine allows you to see your doctor without leaving the comfort of your home. The appointment itself can take different forms, depending on the reason for the visit. For example, you are on the phone, in a video chat or using a messaging app. Clark Howard recently had a routine follow-up visit with his remote doctor, who he says worked perfectly in situation where there was no need to go to the doctor's office in-person. He and I made a telemedicine visit, Clark explains. We had a choice: We could have made a full video appointment or, in the case of my It was routine enough that we made a phone call. In short, a by appointment phone call and were able to talk through the situation. Telemedicine is ideal for routine appointments and minor illnesses such as allergies, colds, infections, rashes, sore throats, sprains, Us and more. How does Telemedicine work? Telemedicine works differently depending on your symptoms, your doctor and the platform used to communicate. You type questions and answers to your doctor into a messaging platform, talk to your doctor by phone or communicate face-to-face via online video software. Unless your doctor is able to call you and diagnose you over the phone, you'll probably need a computer, smartphone or tablet, along with reliable Internet access to complete a visit to a doctor remotely. During the actual appointment you expect a similar process to what you would see in a traditional doctor's office. We had the follow-up as we would have had in the office, only with me in my house and him in his house, Clark says of his recent appointment. It's a great way for a doctor not to be exposed to what you have and for you not to be exposed to what other patients have. Ultimately, with the right technology, telemedicine can work just like a regular doctor's appointment. Make sure you communicate clearly with your doctor during a remote visit to make sure they have all the information they need to make a diagnosis. Finding an online doctor As telemedicine increases in popularity, more options are becoming available for you to make online contact with a doctor. If a doctor is familiar with your medical history who visits you regularly, you may contact his or her office directly to set up a telemedicine appointment. Right now I think they're really fans of it, Clark says of GPs. If you have a doctor, he or she may be willing to do a telemedicine type of thing. Depending on your needs, your doctor may be willing to schedule a conversation or video chat instead of a personal visit. Aside from your primary doctor, here are five places to schedule a telemedicine appointment: This online service is available 24/7 to connect you to a doctor via live video in minutes, assuming it's not during a period of high demand. The company accepts insurance, but without it, medical visits have a flat rate of \$75 and therapy starts at \$129. 2. CareClix This is another company able to connect patients with doctors for virtual exams. Although costs vary, CareClix accepts a variety of insurance plans. 3. Teladoc Teladoc offers consultations with doctors, therapists and medical experts via phone or video. The cost of an appointment varies depending on your health plan and the type of that you are looking for. Everyday care appointments are available for \$55, mental health appointments start at \$90 and dermatology consultations are \$85 per doctor review. 4. iCliniq This virtual clinic offers a free consultation to get started and to submit written questions, request a phone call or communicate using online video. For the best prices you choose from a variety of service subscriptions that start at \$79 for six months. 5. Amwell This company provides easy access to doctors from your home using the web, mobile apps or phone by calling 1-844-SEE-DOCS. You can see the wide range of insurance plans that are accepted by Amwell here. Otherwise, a standard visit costs \$69. Depending on the company you are going through (or your primary doctor fees) you expect to pay between \$50 and \$80 for a standard visit without insurance. Compared to seeing a personal doctor, the out-of-pocket price is significantly cheaper. Many telemedicine companies also accept insurance and/or payments from eligible HSA or FSA plans to help reduce costs. Contact your insurer to find out if your insurance plan covers the cost of telemedicine, with your insurer about your specific policy. Most virtual doctor's offices are very transparent about pricing and accepted insurance, but don't hesitate to contact the service provider to verify it before planning an appointment if you're not sure. Telemedicine vs. Traditional visits Seeing your doctor online or talking to them over the phone from home can seem very different at first compared to your average appointment. Once you start interacting with your doctor and receiving treatment, you will find that the overall process is still very similar. It was really, in some ways, very different from a normal doctor's visit, Clark says, but in other ways it felt perfectly normal. Consider these four big differences between telemedicine and traditional medicine before deciding which option is best for you: 1. Convenience Seeing a doctor remotely is very convenient compared to going to a doctor's office. You set up a virtual exam, consultation or therapy session from home and you don't have to leave the house when it's time for the appointment. This also means that you will not expose your doctor to your illness or come into contact with other patients. 2. Waiting time With telemedicine, you usually are seen within minutes of making your appointment unless there is a period of high demand. Outside the emergency room, traditional doctor's offices usually can't offer you same-day appointments. 3. Cost If you don't have insurance, telemedicine is usually a more affordable option compared to a personal visit. Several telemedicine companies also accept insurance and/or payments from HSA or FSA subscriptions. 4. Completeness The biggest drawback of telemedicine is the communication barrier. Technology can only carry us so far, and there just some medical care that you don't receive remotely. Your doctor will only be able to make decisions and give guidance based on what you tell or show. Last thoughts In general, telemedicine will never completely replace the hands-on care you receive from a personal visit to your doctor. Nevertheless, for common common medical advice and simple prescriptions, it can be a more convenient and contact-free way to see your doctor. Clark says: I think through this process people will be more comfortable - both medical professionals and patients - in situations that are more routine, going for a visit to their phone than going for a visit in person. He closes his reflection on the experience by saying he felt he had everything he needed from the appointment. If you are considering using telemedicine to meet a doctor, check with your insurer first to see if you are eligible for coverage. Then talk to your primary physician about options for external appointments or sign up for a telemedicine service as mentioned above. Have you ever used telemedicine to go to a doctor remotely? Let us know how your experience went in the comments below! More Clark.com Content you enjoy: Enjoy:

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