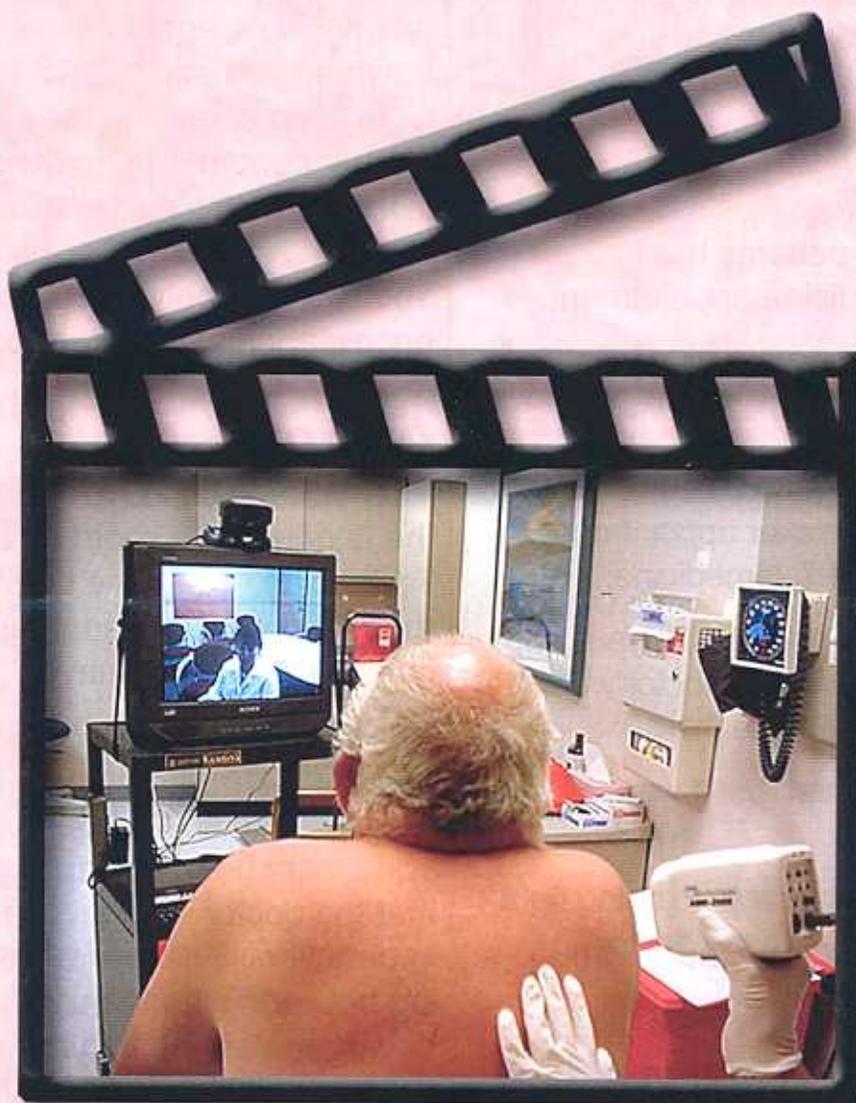


# TELEMEDICINE



***“Relax... It’s Informal Hi-Tech”***

**VA**  **PAHCS**  
Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System

## Lights...Camera

You are about to star in your own "telemedicine show," which is a way for you to see your doctor even though you are in one place and they are in another. Special video equipment is used to let you and your doctor see and talk to each other. Use this guide to make your telemedicine appointment a successful "production."

## The Critics

Here's what some patients have said about their telemedicine appointment:

- Don't have to travel, saves a lot of time
- There were no interruptions, it was a complete one-on-one
- You may get a quicker appointment time by the use of Telemedicine.
- I was quite impressed by it myself, that the person here and the doctor were working together as a team
- I was worried at first, but it was not as hard as I expected
- I think it was comparable to being right in the same room with the doctor
- I would do it again

## The Set & Equipment

Many different types of exams can be done thanks to state-of-the-art equipment, even though the doctor may be miles away. The doctor will be able to see, hear, and talk to you through the TV screen. You will also be able to see, hear, and talk to him/her. In a small section of your screen, you might also see yourself in a "picture-within-a-picture."

During your appointment the doctor may get diagnostic images and sounds that are being sent by the equipment in the room.

Your medical record is available to the doctor at all times.

As with any appointment, your telemedicine appointment is private. It is between you and the doctor. The technician operating the equipment may be in the room, but he is bound by privacy laws. Secure video signals are also used to make sure nobody else can listen in. Your visit will only be recorded if necessary and with your permission.

## Action

After you check in, you will be taken to the telemedicine room by a Nurse or Technician. Feel free to look around the room and its equipment, and ask any questions you may have.

Once the exam starts, you will see your doctor on the TV screen. The technician may operate special cameras and equipment before or during the exam so that the doctor can get all needed information. There may be a short time lag between when you talk and when the doctor actually hears you, and vice versa, but you can have a normal conversation with every person in your room and in the doctor's room.

Please let a member of the telemedicine team know if you are having trouble hearing or seeing the doctor on the TV screen.



## Your Role as the Star of the Show

Relax and enjoy your starring role as a Telemedicine Patient. As stated by one of our patients,

*"It's very easy."*

### Here's what you need to do:

- Be on time.
- Speak in a normal voice. The microphones used will easily pick up your voice.
- Ask questions. There might be a slight audio delay, so pause before asking your questions.

### BRING WITH YOU:

- List of health questions to ask the doctor.
- Any non-VA medical records that concern your present health condition.
- All your medicines, including over-the-counter medicines that you are currently taking.
- Your spouse or caregiver if you need him or her to help you remember or ask questions.
- Paper and pen/pencil so that you can write down notes.
- Let the technician know if you are having trouble hearing or seeing the doctor on the TV screen.
- To cancel your appointment at least 48-hours before your scheduled visit if you choose not to have a telemedicine appointment. However, cancellation will cause a delay in seeing your doctor.

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## Supporting Cast

You may have other people in the room with you, depending on your health needs. These other people could include: a nurse, nurse practitioner, other clinical staff, and/or an equipment specialist. These are your telemedicine team and are specially trained to provide telemedicine care.

## Cut

Make sure you know the answers to these questions before your visit ends:

- When will I find out about my next appointment?
- When will I receive my medications?
- Where and with whom will my next visit be?
- Will my next appointment be a telemedicine appointment or an in-person visit?

## It's a wrap!

### Well done and no surprises!

For insurance purposes, your telemedicine appointment is the same as if you saw the doctor in-person.

If you still have questions or concerns about your telemedicine appointment, please contact your doctor, local VA Medical Center or Clinic.



*The success of your telemedicine visit is enriched by your understanding and taking part in the process.*

The content and development of this brochure was inspired by comments from VA telemedicine patients. Its aim is to inform you and help make your telemedicine appointment a success.

Special thanks to the University of South Florida for their assistance.

Approved by VISN 8 PHE Workgroup 12/11/02.