



Understanding Telehealth

A practical guide for older adults and their caregivers in
Onondaga County

InterFaith Works of Central New York

1010 James St.
Syracuse, NY 13203



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About

Helpful Definitions & Terms 4

First Steps 5

Prepare for Your Visit 6

An Overview of Your Visit 7

Appendix 8

Local Resources 10

ABOUT

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth has become very popular with doctors and patients alike. Telehealth can save time and help people who have trouble getting around, but older adults might not feel comfortable or know how to use the technology. We have some helpful tips to make telehealth easier for older adults and their caregivers.

InterFaith Works of Central New York affirms the dignity of each person and every faith tradition, builds racial and religious equity, and creates bridges of understanding among us.

The Digital Inclusion Program is dedicated to helping older adults safely and confidently learn to use devices like phones, tablets, and computers, so they can do more of the things they want and need to do in a digital world.

Lori Klivak, PhD

Senior Director, Center for Healthy Aging

lklivak@ifwcnny.org

(315) 449-3552 ext. 109

www.interfaithworkscny.org/programs/senior-services

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS & TERMS

“**Telehealth** is a service that uses video calling and other technologies to help you see your doctor or other health care providers from home instead of at a medical facility.” (NIA)

There are 3 main types of Telehealth

Live-Video: A telehealth visit using video and audio in real time. This can be scheduled in advance or on-demand.



Voice-Only: A telehealth visit over the phone with only audio.



Remote Monitoring: Medical data that is collected and sent to the provider electronically (blood pressure, blood sugar, weight).



FIRST STEPS

To have a **live-video or voice-only** telehealth visit with your doctor, you will need:

- An active email address/phone number
- A device (phone, laptop, computer, tablet)
- Reliable internet access
- Comfortability with using the internet
- If you are requesting an “on-demand” telehealth visit, you may need to access to your Patient Portal.



PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

- Practice clicking the telehealth link.
- Practice finding important functions like the camera and microphone.
- Agree on a backup plan (like a phone call) with your doctor if there is a problem.
- Charge your device.
- Find a quiet, private, and well-lit area that is close to the source of your internet connection.
- If you do not want your home care services present during the visit, ask them to be in another part of the home during the visit.
- Complete any needed permissions before your visit.



YOUR TELEHEALTH VISIT

Beginning of Visit

- Introduce yourself and any caregiver(s) who are there with you.
- Confirm how much time you have for your visit with your doctor.
- Feel confident asking questions or bringing up concerns, just like you would at an in-person visit. If you need more time, you can schedule a follow-up visit.



End of Visit

- Ask your doctor where you can access your After Visit Summary. This may be available in your Patient Portal.
- For any questions or concerns, contact your provider through your Patient Portal or by calling the office.

APPENDIX

Patient Self-Advocacy for Older Adults

These steps will help you stay in control of your health and make the most of your health visits.

Prepare Ahead of Time

- Write down questions or concerns before your appointment.
- Think about what's been bothering you, any new symptoms, or changes in your health.



Speak Up

- It's important to tell your doctor how you're feeling. If you don't understand something, ask for it to be explained again.
- Don't be shy—your health matters!

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Have a List of Medications

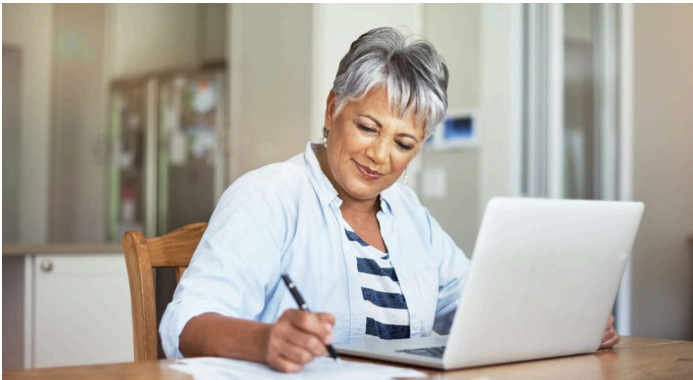
- Make sure to have a list of all the medicines you take. This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, and vitamins.

Take Notes

- During the call, write down what the doctor says.
- If you can't write, ask someone to help or use the “record” function (if allowed).

Ask About Next Steps

- Always ask what comes next—whether it's a new prescription, tests, or a follow-up appointment. Knowing the plan will help you stay on track.



LOCAL RESOURCES



Community Telehealth Access Sites

The New York Statewide Senior Action Council is an organization that educates, empowers, and advocates older adults in New York State. On their website, they have a list of locations where you can get internet access for a telehealth visit.

Access Sites in Onondaga County:

- Baldwinsville Public Library
- Central Library
- Northern Onondaga Public Library- Brewerton Branch
- Northern Onondaga Public Library- Cicero Branch
- Liverpool Public Library
- Manlius Library
- Marcellus Free Library
- Maxwell Memorial Library
- Northern Onondaga Public Library- North Syracuse Branch
- PEACE, Inc. (Southside and Westside Family Resource Centers)

For more information, visit their website at:
<https://www.nysenior.org/telehealth-initiative/>

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Literacy CNY

Digital Literacy is a program of LiteracyCNY that teaches adults basic computer skills. Trained volunteers assist individuals with operating devices, navigating the internet, and using software. The program offers free drop-in and appointment-based computer help at locations across Central NY. Go to LiteracyCNY.org or contact (315)420-2355 for more information.

Neighborhood Advisors

Neighborhood Advisors are members of the community who can connect older adults with important resources and services, including health care and rideshare programs.

To be connected with a Neighborhood Advisor in your area, contact the **Onondaga County Office for Aging** by phone at: (315) 435-2362.

2-1-1 CNY

A free service across Central New York that connects callers to critical health and human services in the community. Call or text at any time.



The Center for Healthy Aging at InterFaith Works promotes activity, socialization and lifelong learning, helping older adults to live well and age with dignity.

Our Programs Include:

- Volunteer-based Companionship and Friendly visits through AmeriCorps Senior Companions
- Aging Services for New Americans
- Digital Inclusion for Older Adults
- Information and Assistance through our Neighborhood Advisor
 - The Greater Syracuse Aging Services Coalition
 - Medical Supply Closet