



Communication Strategies for Telehealth Visits

FIND THE BEST ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CALL

- Healthcare provider(s) need to be able to hear and see you well
- Ensure you have good lighting
- Eliminate or reduce background noise
- Pick a location with good sound quality (for example, minimal echo)
- Ensure you can see the video clearly. Consider using a large screen if possible
- Let household members know you have a telehealth appointment, and you need a quiet space with no interruptions

SET COMMUNICATION RULES IN ADVANCE

- Tell healthcare providers about your hearing loss and how you communicate
- Ask people to put their cameras at eye level
- Ask providers to face the camera and ensure their face is clearly visible while talking (for example, not placing objects, like papers, in front of their faces)
- Ask providers to talk directly into the microphone using a clear, natural and regular rate of speech. Headsets can help
- Consider arranging a hand signal, chat message, or platform feature (for example, a raised hand feature) to let the person know you need to interrupt due to a communication need
- Inform the provider that you will need to see their face for communication so they can make plans to attend the appointment without the use of a mask
- Inform the provider if you need additional time to respond due to processing the information spoken (for example, when lip reading)
- If using communication accommodations such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) or American Sign Language interpretation, inform the provider that there will be some delay to your responses



Hard of Hearing

OTHER TIPS

- Plan what to do if the telehealth appointment is disconnected
 - Request a direct phone line or text number
- Review what you need to know in advance such as unfamiliar terminology or how to use the platform
- You may be able to submit some information using a patient portal prior to the appointment to ease communication during the appointment
- Make a list of questions ahead of time to help you remember what to ask
- Have any materials you will need to refer to readily available such as your insurance card or medication list
- If you are having trouble understanding something, ask the provider to rephrase rather than repeat the same statement
- Ask the provider to use the chat feature to clarify critical information such as how often to take medication and the correct dosage
- Be certain to verify your understanding when needed. Repeating back what you thought you heard and asking if you are correct, is a good way to do this
- Be patient, your provider may be new to learning to communicate with a patient that has hearing loss



Hard of Hearing patient wearing headset and using CART captioning while talking with a physician.

To learn more about your rights during telehealth appointments, and how to advocate for your communication access, please contact the [NC DSDHH Regional Center](#) near you.



This document was developed through a collaborative process involving the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers.

