

Telemedicine makes physician visits easy, convenient, comfortable

by Sarah Menzuber, ATC



Created by Hanna-Barbera Productions, The Jetsons was an animated cartoon about a family living sometime in the future with elaborate robotic technology. In an episode that aired between 1962-1963, Jane Jetson arranges a doctor's appointment for her son, Elroy. The appointment was virtual and a precursor of today's telemedicine capabilities

What was once only an idea depicted in science fiction or cartoon shows about what future communication would be, has become reality. Using a smart phone, watch or even a tablet to communicate were inconceivable. To think Jane Jetson didn't take her son Elroy to the doctor when he was sick, but instead scheduled a telemedicine visit which in 1962 was really a "far out" concept.

Telemedicine, as depicted by Hanna-Barbera, is now in practice but according to historians, telemedicine, or the remote diagnosis and treatment for patients by means of telecommunication actually has been used as early as 1615 when messengers rode from village to village to relate medical advice and/or deliver potions and medicine. As technology improved so did the forms of communication including smoke signals, drums, horns, telegraph, telephone and eventually to today's computers.

Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine, telemedicine primarily was used to provide healthcare support and technology to rural or less populated parts of the country. For example, a cardiologist can "examine" a patient admitted to the hospital hundreds of miles away to diagnose and begin treatment for a stroke or heart attack and monitor the patient's progress.

However, the pandemic forced healthcare providers to find ways to see and treat patients safely without them having to leave home. Telemedicine for everyone soon became the "new normal." While many were reluctant at first, the option quickly caught on because of many benefits including:

- Convenient and requires no travel time or expenses
- Discuss acute injuries and decide if X-ray, further imaging or an in-office visit is needed
- Discuss possible treatment for chronic injuries and required care management
- Ideal for a quick "check-in" with patient
- Time to thoroughly answer any questions or concerns
- Avoids expensive clinics, urgent care offices and ER visits
- Easily review imaging such as X-ray, MRI, or CT with the screen sharing abilities
- Less waiting time as patient visits are more efficient.



Dr. Steven Chudik reviews the findings of a knee MRI with a patient via a telemedicine visit.

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How does it work?

If your physician incorporated a telemedicine appointment option into his/her practice as Dr. Steven Chudik with the Shoulder, Knee & Sports Medicine Injury Clinic did, you will be provided instructions ahead of your appointment and it will include an email or meeting link. You will need a tablet, phone, or computer with a microphone and camera, and internet access that can open the appointment link and “to arrive you” at your scheduled time.

Once you open the provided link and enter information such as your name, you have “arrived” and most likely will be moved to “a virtual waiting room” until the doctor connects and begins your visit. Dr. Chudik uses a telemedicine platform that is encrypted and HIPPA-compliant to ensure your privacy. Also, while you wait for your visit to begin, check to make sure your camera and microphone options are on so you and your doctor can see and talk to each other.



To get the most out of your telemedicine visit check these items ahead of time:

- Make sure you have a strong WIFI or ethernet connection
- Close any unused programs that might be open on your computer or device
- Restart computer prior to your visit
- Check for any updates on your browser. Google Chrome, Firefox or Safari are generally compatible with web-based meeting software.
- Make sure to sit in a quiet area with good lighting that preferably illuminates you from the front so you face is visible. Do not sit with a window or light behind you.
- Test your camera and microphone ahead of time and make sure you have enabled or turned them on in your settings options.
- Position the computer, or test where to place your tablet so your injury, body part or concern is easily visible. This may require you to wear clothing that allows the injury or condition to be viewed without having to undress.

If you’ve put off getting evaluated and diagnosed for a knee, shoulder, sports injury, or even a second opinion on a previously diagnosed issue because of COVID-19 concerns, time, travel or any other reason, call Dr. Chudik’s office today at 630-324-0402 or email contactus@chudikmd.com to set up a telemedicine appointment you can have from the comfort and convenience of your home.

Note: Because insurance coverage varies, please check with your carrier before scheduling a telemedicine appointment to determine if your visit will be covered.