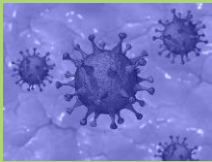


# COVID-19 and Youth

## Telemedicine & Youth: A Conversation with the VT RAYS



During the pandemic, medical providers have been using telemedicine (telephone visits or video visits). The Vermont youth health advisory council, the VT RAYS, shared their perspective about how youth perceive this technology, personal experiences around telehealth visits, and advice for the medical community on making this technology youth friendly.

Q

### General thoughts regarding telephone and televideo visits?

R

- Video meetings with providers help keep appointments consistent.
- Helpful to connect with providers right now, they have time to do it and some of us need more support.
- It's a little weird staring at someone on the screen, but it works.
- If you don't like looking at yourself on the screen you can turn your video off or sit "off camera" while talking.
- For some, phone conversations are easier than video conversations.
- Some appointments, like the dentist, you just can't do over telemedicine or the phone. It is stressful not to know when those appointments will be rescheduled.
- One youth shared they had been going to physical therapy before COVID. They have been receiving helpful videos on how to do exercises so they understand what to keep doing during this time.

Q

### Providers are curious as to how to give a better experience. It feels hard to engage with patients. Technology can be a bit awkward. Do you have any tips?

R

- If you are having therapy or a confidential check-in session with your doctor and family is around, it's hard to be alone and ensure privacy. You could tell parents to take a walk during this time or find another place to talk, even go outside or use a family vehicle.
- Silence can be powerful. It is okay if there is silence during a phone or televideo appointment.

Q

### Are youth more likely to engage in telemedicine than in in-person visits? If they haven't seen a provider in clinic in a while, do you think they would be more inclined to do a telemedicine appointment?

R

- Youth are comfortable with technology.
- A call/video is a good way to see if one needs to go into the office and be seen in person.
- It is fine, it's not that different. But, some physical problems would be hard to describe over the phone, without the doctor actually doing a physical exam.
- Out of convenience, telemedicine could be attractive as you don't have to make the trip in person to the office.
- Some prefer to see providers in person. But if it were a pressing issue, and only telemedicine is available then that would work.
- Televideo feels very awkward for some people, if the appointment isn't important the awkwardness is not worth it.
- For some it is easier to say things, be honest/open, over the phone.
- Youth are comfortable with just talking on the phone.
- I can "think things through" better over the phone vs meeting face to face.
- It can be more comfortable over the phone, as you are not seen and feeling vulnerable and it's more comfortable.
- Some prefer a phone call visit over video, but would video if had to.
- It could be a deterrent getting back to in person appointments if people like telemedicine a lot.

Q

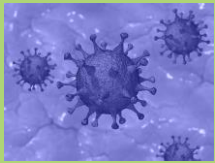
### Would it be annoying to have part of the appointment over the phone and part of the appointment in-person for vital signs and exam at a later date?

R

- It would be best to do everything all at once at a later date.
- Screening questionnaire results right now might be different than when all of this is over. Providers might not get a good idea of how things have been in general prior to CV19. Answers and questions might be different than when things are "normal".
- It's still a good idea to check in to see how people are doing during CV19 precautions.

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Q

**What do we do about patients who have not been going to see their medical providers at all in the past few years? Could this be a time to engage youth who have not been seen in a while?**

R

- Might want to do additional outreach to people now. People have time now to pay attention to their health.
- Telemedicine visits could be really helpful if people have barriers with travel, missing school. Offices could make an effort to reach out and ask them about a telemedicine visit.

Q

**So your doctor could call and just say that they are checking in during this strange time, are you up for that?**

R

- People have time to talk right now. Some people are bored and want to talk to more people. I think it would be helpful.
- People might have questions like “What is the best way to navigate quarantine?”
- Some people may feel they should be doing X, Y, and Z and others may be “just trying to get by”. It would be good to talk to someone about what is going on and “what to do”
- People might need advice about the best way to cope; laying around all day isn’t good; people may need advice about things to do. “You want to come out in the best place possible after all of this”.
- Doctors can ask how your family is doing, too. How is your home situation?
- Talking with your provider can be an outlet to ask questions about health and CV19, as you can’t find everything on Google.
- Some patients may just need to talk to someone and find out general information. You (providers) can ask, “Is there anything I can do to help?”.
- Sending an e-mail inviting people to set up telemedicine visits could be helpful. Something like “schedule a telemedicine visit if you’d like to talk. Our office is still here to support you.”
- Some may not have specific questions, but just want to talk.
- If I’ve seen my medical provider for a long time, it would be better for the medical provider to reach out directly than for someone from the office to call with a scripted message.

### QUESTIONS THE YOUTH HAD FOR PEDIATRICIANS

Q

**What is the provider perspective regarding telemedicine?**

R

- If you have a good rapport with your patient, video is fine. But, when you don’t know your patient well, or the person is a new patient, it can be more awkward; it is less ideal and there can be less of a connection.

Q

**How does one set up a telemedicine or phone appointment? How do youth know they can see a provider by video or phone?**

R

- Most providers are offering telemedicine during the pandemic and may continue to offer telemedicine in the future.
- Youth can call their provider office to set up telemedicine visits.
- Offices use different platforms for telemedicine, they will provide all the details regarding how to set up appointments.