

## TELEMEDICINE WHAT IS IT AND SHOULD YOUR DOCTOR OFFER IT?

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DV Pediatrics is proud to announce the addition of telemedicine to our service offerings. Telemedicine is the use of electronic communication to exchange medical information to improve a patient's health. Telemedicine for patient care using interactive video can be traced back into the 1960s. Telemedicine can be used for patient or physician education, specialist consultation, research or, as the remainder of this article discusses, telepractice. Telepractice is the provision of medical care to improve patient outcomes through the use of secured networks involving voice and/or visual means.

Telemedicine should never completely replace the in-person office visit but rather enhance patient health care. Telemedicine provide medical care by the child's personal physician healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) to provide continuous ongoing care and improve health outcomes. Telemedicine may also reduce school and work absenteeism, reduce time and money spent on travel and the use of urgent cares and emergency rooms.

Erosion of the patient-physician relationship and the disruption of continuity of care in the US is a major health and financial concern. This issue has been promoted by the rapid rise of urgent care (UC) and the rise of stand-alone on-line providers (OLP). These options provide quick care but may be more expensive. They commonly may not communicate with your primary care physician, and may even provide treatments that are not supported by the medical literature. An example is providing antibiotics for a sore throat even though they caused by viruses approximately 70% of the time.

Telemedicine consultation with your primary care physician is a step up from UC or OLP because your doctor has access to your medical records, prior treatments and responses. Additionally, your primary care provider is also capable of determining if an office visit is necessary.

Chronic medical care can be partially provided by the use of telemedicine. Eligible conditions such as behavioral health (ADHD, anxiety and depression), asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, and obesity. Some acute conditions may be managed by telemedicine. Some examples may include allergic rhinitis, sinusitis (over the age of 5), contact dermatitis, insect bites, gastroenteritis and swimmer's ear. At this time, ear infections, urinary tract infections and sore throat management should not be done by telemedicine secondary to diagnostic error and potential for unnecessary antibiotic use.

For more information on telemedicine and other services please go to [www.dvpediatrics.com](http://www.dvpediatrics.com).