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Telemedicine

Telemedicine is the remote delivery of healthcare services, such as health assessments or consultations, using telecommunications.

- It allows healthcare providers to evaluate, diagnose and treat patients using common technology, such as video conferencing and smartphones, without the need for an in-person visit.
- Generally provided by a primary care physician's office, by a patient's employer as part of health benefits or via a web search.

Telemedicine is not a substitute for in-person treatment of emergency medical care.

Types of Telemedicine. Two main categories are:

- Remote patient monitoring (telemonitoring) Patients with chronic diseases can be monitored in their homes with mobile medical devices that collect data about blood sugar levels, blood pressure or other vital signs. Remote caregivers can review the data instantly.
- Interactive telemedicine. Allows physicians and patients to communicate in real time by telephone or the use of video conferencing.

Example of a typical telemedicine discussion:

- The patient calls a telemedicine number.
- Medical history and symptoms are gathered.
- The patient is then connected to a clinician via video conferencing or gets an interactive call back from a physician or nurse.
- The provider they speak to may be their physician or a contracted clinician at a telemedicine network.
- The patient may receive further instructions, such as a recommendation to go to a hospital, obtain a prescription or to schedule a follow-up appointment.



Advantages of telemedicine for patients include:

- Convenience: Often a time-saving way to see and speak to a clinician for minor and non-urgent medical needs instead of going to a doctors office or emergency department.
- Don't have to miss work for an appointment.
- No travel time or associated expenses, such as paying for gas or child care.
- Increased access: Patients in rural areas can obtain specialty services, such as mental health treatment or post-surgery follow up, that they otherwise might not get without traveling a large distance for an in-person visit.
- Gives providers another option in encouraging their patients' healthy lifestyle choices, such as smoking cessation.

Disadvantages of telemedicine may include:

- Cybersecurity: As with any technology systems are susceptible to hackers and breaches.
- Inability to prescribe medications: Many states generally do not allow online prescribing without an established relationship between the physician and patient. A physical examination or evaluation may be required before a physician can write a prescription for a patient, but what qualifies as a physical examination varies between states.
- Technical training: Providers need to be trained on how to use telemedicine equipment.
- The costs of the equipment.
- Licensing issues: Certain states may require providers who practice telemedicine across state lines to have a valid license in the state where the patient is located.

Happy Fathers Day

"A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society."

Billy Graham

Health Notes: Kratom use Causes Concern; Effects on Heart Seen

Kratom is an over-the-counter herbal drug used by about 3 million to 5 million people to enhance mood, reduce fatigue and treat pain.

Although people who take kratom believe in its value, researchers who have studied kratom think its side effects and safety problems more than offset any potential benefits. The FDA has listed kratom as a "drug of chemical concern."

- ◆ The drug has been linked to 91 fatal overdoses in the U.S. from July 2016 to December 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control, accounting for less than 1 percent of fatal overdoses.
- ◆ Kratom poisonings rose 50-fold from 13 in 2011 to 682 in 2017.
- ◆ At small doses, it acts as a mild stimulant.
- ◆ Side effects include agitation, irritability, and fast heart beat (tachycardia).
- ◆ At moderate to high doses, it can produce opioid-like effects, including some pain relief.
- ◆ Serious clinical effects include seizures, respiratory depression, slow heart beat (bradycardia), kidney failure, and cardiac arrest (the heart stops beating).



The evidence so far indicates that there are serious health and safety risks with the use of Kratom. More research and study of its use, effects and effectiveness are needed. Ask yourself "is it worth using this drug when we know so little about it?"

Facebook Quizzes: Think before taking one

Facebook quizzes, polls, and trivia games are fun to take, but some are schemes to steal your profile, hack your identity, or just send spam.



Suppose you see a quiz about family origins. So, what is your mother's maiden name? The app will reveal all! But... didn't you just use that info as a bank security question? If so, you just gave unknown people access to the answer, along with all of the info on your Facebook profiles and page.

One notoriously evil app that did this asked for the names of concerts people attended -- another common security question.

Pet names, birth places, best friends, first car, first teacher, vacation destinations--you are revealing answers you may have given for security or may give in the future. You'll forget about the quiz, but the quiz makers are never going to forget YOU.

Why refrigerate eggs?

In most countries, eggs are stored on an unrefrigerated shelf.

Although this can be jarring to North Americans, it isn't that far out. After all, hens do not lay in refrigerators.

So why do we keep eggs cool? It is one way to fight salmonella contamination.

In the U.S., egg producers must wash eggs to remove contaminants.

- ◆ This process also removes a natural coating on the egg, leaving it porous.
- ◆ So the washed eggs must be immediately refrigerated and stay that way.
- ◆ A washed egg, if left at room temperature, may sweat, allowing the growth of bacteria that could enter the egg through the shell, according to eggsafety.org.



And another thing, because the eggs are now porous, they can absorb odors and flavors from other foods in the frig. To prevent this from happening the eggs should also be kept in the carton.