

# CORONAVIRUS & PROSTATE CANCER



According to the IQVIA Institute more than **22 million** preventative screening tests may be cancelled or delayed, resulting in **80,000 missed** diagnoses of breast, prostate, colorectal, cervical, and lung cancers.



Nearly **23,000** men may experience missed or delayed diagnosis of prostate cancer due to postponed or cancelled screening tests.



According to SEER data there are over **3 million** men living with prostate cancer in the United States.

Cancer did not retreat when COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, impacted the world. It did add yet another element of uncertainty during this global pandemic. Patients at risk for and living with prostate cancer still need high-quality, timely care. Urologists are quickly adapting their practices to continue providing their patient care while mitigating the risk of spreading coronavirus.

No two cancers or patients are alike. There are many factors that can influence treatment decisions, including if it is smart to delay treatment in efforts to avoid unnecessary exposure to COVID-19. It is important to discuss with your physician the best course of action for you and your treatment plan. This includes having discussions on managing medications, delaying treatment, the utilization of telehealth and being safe when in office visits are necessary.



# TELEHEALTH

Telehealth visits have become a mainstay of healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many health care systems are encouraging patients to utilize telehealth services to avoid unnecessary trips to the clinic.

## **What is telehealth?**

Telehealth is the use of telecommunications technologies to deliver health-related services and information that support patient care, administrative activities, and health education.

## **What services can be offered through telehealth to monitor prostate cancer?**

There are several urologic services that can be conducted through telehealth visits. Services such as monitoring chronic medical conditions, prescription refills and some new patient visits can provide sufficient information to a physician to offer an informed diagnosis and treatment plan.

## **Prescriptions**

Reach out to your physician's office and pharmacy if you need a prescription refill. They will work together to get the necessary prescriptions updated and many pharmacies have delivery services.

## **Are telehealth visits covered by insurance?**

Coverage varies based insurance provider and where you live. During the COVID-19 pandemic Medicare and Medicaid have expanded coverage for virtual services. Many private insurers have also expanded what they'll cover, and many states have relaxed restrictions on reimbursing providers for delivery of remote services. If you have a question about will your telehealth appointment be covered, please contact your insurance provider.

If you no longer have health insurance due to COVID-19, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) to review other options for regaining insurance access.

## **Privacy**

Even during telehealth services, privacy and protecting your medical information is still a major concern. Your health information is private and should remain despite these abnormal circumstances. Your provider should let you know which telehealth platform they use, and you'll be sent a link and instructions to connect via that system safely while protecting your privacy.

### **Resources**

- **Health Insurance:** [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)
- **Medicare & Medicaid Telehealth Services:** [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov)
- **How to Properly Wear a Mask:** [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)
- **Information for Patients & Physicians:** [www.prostateconditions.org/covid19](http://www.prostateconditions.org/covid19)

## What do you need for a telehealth appointment?

### Technology

To get the most out of a telehealth visit with your doctor or health care provider, ideally you should have the following:

- A telephone line
- High-speed internet connection
- Video access through on a smart phone, computer or tablet
- Your healthcare provider may be using an app to conduct these telehealth visits, which should be downloaded before your appointment.
- Check that the volume is up and camera access has been granted to the appropriate application before the call starts.
- Before the appointment has started make sure your device is fully charged.

*If you need help with your devices or the telehealth platforms, consider asking a family member, friend or neighbor before your appointment.*

### Paperwork

- Your physician will likely still need information regarding medical history, insurance and any additional forms completed and sent in electronically before the appointment.

### Consider Your Environment

- Try to find a quiet and well-lit location so your physician can see and understand you clearly. A location free from distractions will allow you to focus on your appointment. The physician will want to speak with to the patient directly but having a caregiver in the room is allowed. Often physicians will ask the patient to answer a question then allow the caregiver to provide additional information.

### Preparation

- Make list of your symptoms including when they started, how severe they are and if there have been any changes since your last doctor's visit.
- Make list of medications you are currently taking.
- Let the physician or nurse know if there have been any other members of your household who have been sick.
- Make list of questions you have about your condition.
- Have a pen and paper ready to take notes.

#### Tips for the Telehealth Call

- **Be patient.** There may be a high volume of calls so there may be a small wait to be connected.
- **Talk clearly and loudly** ensuring the provider can hear you. Make sure they can see you through your camera.
- **Clearly present your symptoms.**
- **Answer the provider's questions as clearly and to the point as possible.**

# IN OFFICE VISIT

Health care providers around the country are committed to proactively balancing the risk of COVID-19 and prostate cancer by implementing enhanced safety requirements that will provide patients with the highest, safest care possible.

## How to prepare for your in-office doctor's appointment:

### Questions to ask your health care provider before the visit:

- What is their arrival policy? Should you call before coming into the office?
- Can you bring a caregiver with you?
- Should you submit any paperwork electronically before the appointment?

### What to bring?

Your health care provider should let you know everything they require you to bring before the appointment. However, you should be prepared to wear a mask throughout the duration of the visit. The clinic may not allow you to bring a caregiver so it is important to check beforehand.

### What to expect:

All medical care offices are taking extra precautions during this time as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. Many offices have implemented:

- Temperature checks
- Requiring everyone to wear masks
- Closed off waiting areas
- Comply with social distancing recommendations of 6ft apart
- Asking patients to submit paperwork electronically
- Requiring patients to disinfect their hands upon arrival

### How to Use a Mask Properly

- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks.
- To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

***Wearing a Mask Shows You Care!***