

# Telehealth Tip Sheet for Providers

for “patients” living with  
early-stage and metastatic  
breast cancer



## Using Telehealth During COVID-19 to Help Your Patients...and YOU!

Telehealth can be used to reach all your patients, particularly your most vulnerable patients to provide much needed education and support. It can also serve to:



Lower stress for  
immunocompromised patients  
who fear exposure.



Help patients who are  
self-isolating to feel less alone.



Reduce fears about the impact of  
COVID-19 on patients health and  
patients access to treatment.

### Ensuring a Positive Patient Telehealth Experience

- Use a high-speed internet connection and use a wired versus wireless connection. If you're having speed issues, close unnecessary applications and windows on your computer.
- Ensure your device is charged and plugged in to avoid running low on power.
- Pre-test headphones/microphone quality – if at all possible, don't use computer microphone. Using headphones helps to ensure patient confidentiality and improves likelihood the patient will feel more comfortable sharing information.
- Your camera should be at eye level.
- Close blinds or adjust lights to reduce glare.
- Your patient may be new at telehealth, uncomfortable and/or unsure of the process, so make sure to exercise patience and compassion.
- Sign on early to test everything out, especially the first time.
- Use as much direct eye contact as possible during the call if you're using video conferencing. To do so, be sure you are looking at your camera, not your patient on the screen. Most cameras are located on the top of the screen at the center. Use cues to show you are listening, such as nodding from time to time.
- Highly recommend to your patients that they use video conferencing versus phone unless phone is the only option. Many people feel isolated at this time. Seeing each other can help.
- Have your IT department support number available in case you need assistance.
- Follow your usual clinical protocol for patient visits including summarizing next steps for the patient at the end of the call.



# Frequently Asked Questions “FAQ’s” and Tips to Help Your Patients Feel Less Stressed During COVID-19



Remind your patients to follow current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control “CDC” and other health organization regarding social distancing, to avoid large group activities, to perform proper hand washing.



Following those orders of staying home with the exception of essentials such as food, medical care, etc. Contact your healthcare provider first by phone to confirm existing scheduled appointments or if you need care.



Stay hydrated by drinking water and clear liquid beverages.



Properly disinfect door knobs when you return home and use a paper towel, your elbow, or another hands-free way to turn the faucet on and off, as well as when opening doors.

## Will COVID-19 affect the availability of my treatment options?

The COVID-19 global pandemic is continuing to evolve and is greatly impacting the medical system. Make sure you speak with all members of your healthcare team on how to proceed with your treatments and plan of care. Please call your medical team to stay informed about any changes regarding your treatment options and plan of care.

## I have a non-emergency appointment with your office coming up. Does this increase my risk of COVID-19 infection?

Please call us before coming in so we can help you assess risk, take preventative steps, and determine if the appointment can be postponed or if we can use a Telehealth solution such as a video conference call.

## I am scheduled for a follow up visit to get my prescription/prescription refill but I’m too scared to leave home for fear of infection. Can I still get my prescription? If so, how?

Yes, you can call our office to request a prescription/refill. Some pharmacies also offer prescription home delivery.

## I’m due for follow up screenings but I’ve been told they’ve been canceled. Without screenings, how do I know my medication is working or if the cancer has come back?

Each patient is unique. Let’s set up a time to discuss this and create a plan together for managing surveillance over the coming months.

Structural inequities may contribute to increased risk from COVID-19 in Black, Latino and other ethnic minority and low-income populations, so ensure that you are aware of potential barriers and work with your patient to mitigate them.

## I am experiencing some side effects from my medication, but I know healthcare providers are overwhelmed right now so I feel guilty about calling.

Follow the medication guidelines provided for you and contact us to let us know if you’re having any serious side effects, as identified by your medical team.

## I’ve been trying to reach your office, but I can’t get through due to long wait times. How else can I get my questions answered about my treatment plan and medications?

We are doing our best to be available by phone or email. However, if you’re experiencing long wait times or you are unable to get through, please keep trying. At your next appointment, ask your providers if there is someone else you can contact during COVID-19 to best serve your medical needs.



# Using Open-Ended Questions to Enhance Telehealth Patient Appointments

Open-ended questions, versus those that can be answered with yes/no, inspire and invite more interaction and engagement by the patient.

## 3 Tips to For Using Open-Ended Questions:



**Use Active Listening.** Active listening involves not only hearing the patient's response, but also noticing tone of voice, facial expressions/body language, choice of words, breathing rate.



**When asking questions, avoid 'Why'?** Why tends to lead patients into past thinking, judgment, and blame. Instead, focus on who, what, and how. For example, instead of asking "Why didn't you take your medication regularly", ask, "What made it challenging for you to be able to take your medication regularly?"



**Modify - Rephrase.** Use "it's normal/ common/ understandable"; or "you would be \_\_\_\_." Avoid using "I." For example, "It's normal to have some fears about COVID-19."

## Sample Open-Ended Questions

### Start of Call:

*What are your top concerns or questions you'd like to discuss today?*

### Main Part of the Call:

*On a scale from 1-10 with 10 being 'Always Consistent' and 1 being 'Not at all Consistent', how often are you able to consistently take your medication each day?*

*If they are having difficulty being consistent, what is making it difficult to take your medication consistently?*

*What can you do that would help you be more consistent? What have you done in the past that has worked for you when you've needed to consistently take an action?*

*What, if any, side effects have you experienced or are you experiencing since your treatments?*

*What steps have you taken to reduce those side effects?*

*What else do you feel it would be helpful for me to know so I can best assist you?*

*What you've shared with me so far is very helpful. What else might be contributing to this challenge/situation/ concern/feeling of \_\_\_\_\_?*



## Closing the call:

The intentions in the final moments of the call includes:



Make sure the patient doesn't have any pressing concerns or unanswered questions that have not yet been covered. Also, make sure you are not making assumptions and clearly understand that every patient has unique needs and life experiences (i.e., poverty, domestic abuse, trauma, fear of the medical system, mental health challenges, etc.).



Help your patient see the benefit of investing time in the call by having them identify their most important takeaways. This plants a seed to inspire them to anticipate the remaining calls will also be of value.

*What other questions or concerns would like to address today that we didn't already cover?*

*Of the areas we covered, what would you say are the two most helpful takeaways for you?*

“ They may forget your name, but they'll never forget how you made them feel.  
- Maya Angelou ”

This tip sheet is being provided to you, compliments of Tigerlily Foundation and Puma Biotechnology, Inc. to help you and your patients during this challenging time. Thank you for the care and support you continue to provide for your patients.

