

Preparing for a Virtual Care Appointment

Electronics and Browser Compatibility

You will need a webcam or webcam enabled computer, smartphone, or tablet with good-quality speakers, a microphone, and a supported web browser. When possible, use earphones/headphones. Check compatibility between the app/program used for the virtual appointment and your browser and computer system.

Communication

Provide an email or telephone number by which you will send, receive, and respond to communications with your doctor and the administrative staff. Ask to receive a visit summary following the appointment. Check if the doctor uses an electronic health record system through which you may correspond and retain test results. Clarify how best to communicate follow-up questions or concerns after the visit.

Homework

If possible, complete and submit patient questionnaires a day or two in advance of your visit. Telehealth visits are often brief. Therefore, there will be less time to discuss last-minute questions or concerns that occur to you during the appointment. Prepare a list of questions, concerns, or troubling symptoms you wish to discuss with your doctor. Make a note of any physical findings from previous studies that you would like to review with the doctor during the visit.

List the medications you are currently taking and changes in medications since your last visit. It is helpful to have the actual medicines available to reference during the appointment. You may also request a copy of this information from your pharmacy.

You may not see the same doctor who routinely follows you in the clinic. Therefore, you may need to explain Barth syndrome and provide a brief description of your health history. Take some time to prepare a written brief that can be submitted with other paperwork in advance of your appointment or to have on hand as a reference when sharing your health history with the doctor.

Locate and be prepared to provide a copy of your photo ID, insurance card. You will need this when checking in for your appointment.

On the Day of the Appointment

Test the audio, camera, and internet connection on your device. Make sure the device is connected and fully charged. Generally, a troubleshooting link is in the appointment confirmation communication. Your computer settings may prompt you to allow pop-ups or share your camera during your visit. Familiarize yourself with how to authorize pop these requests before the appointment. If you cannot connect by video, have a backup plan. Check that you have a telephone number to call if you cannot connect through video.

Have a reliable internet (wi-fi) connection. A wired connection may be preferable. Headsets are helpful to minimize distortion and to block background noise. If you do not have a headset, mute your microphone when you are not speaking. Be in a quiet, private, well-lit space.

Bring a Buddy

It may help to have a partner, caregiver, trusted friend, or family member present during the visit. This approach may be incredibly helpful if you are feeling unwell. In addition to being there when you may not be at your best, a buddy can help prepare for and make the most of the virtual visit. They can help by taking notes. They can remind you about symptoms or details you may have forgotten to mention, which might be necessary for the doctor to know. Inform the administrative staff if someone will be joining from a different location. Share the necessary information with your buddy so they may troubleshoot in advance and fully participate during the appointment.

Your Virtual Appointment Experience

Close your computer windows and programs which are not essential during the virtual appointment. When you arrive, the administrator may place you in a virtual waiting room when you arrive. You may be triaged by a nurse before seeing the doctor.

When Is Virtual Care Not an Option?

Sometimes the doctor has to see you in person, touch, or listen to you to make a proper assessment. Generally, the doctor will wish for you to be evaluated in person if you experience a sudden onset or worsening of symptoms that would suggest an emergency situation such as but not limited to:

- chest pain, heart palpitations, racing of the heart, passing out
- shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, coarse breath sounds
- loss of vision or hearing
- weakness or numbness
- pain, tenderness, or swelling
- abnormally high or low temperature
- prolonged diarrhea or vomiting
- traumatic injury



Virtual Care Doctor Appointments

Checklist



Barth Syndrome
Foundation



Electronics and Browser Capability

Conduct equipment and systems inventory in advance of the appointment.

- Webcam or webcam-enabled computer
- Smartphone, tablet, or computer
- Speakers, microphone or headset with microphone
- Browser and system compatibility



Communication

Determine how you will communicate with the doctor.

- Email, text, or phone
- Electronic Health Portal



Homework

Prepare the information you might need during the appointment, and submit forms in advance.

- Health questionnaires, a brief description of Barth syndrome
- Insurance information and photo identification
- List of current medications or medication changes since the last visit, personal health history



Day of Appointment

Conduct systems check and make sure everything is plugged in and working properly.

- Audio (headset, speakers, and microphone)
- The device you will be using is fully charged
- Locate troubleshooting link to reference if you need it
- Have a backup telephone number to call if the video doesn't work



Bring a Buddy

Invite a partner, caregiver, trusted friend, or family to help you prepare for the appointment and to be present during the appointment.

- Tell doctors staff if someone else will be joining you for your appointment
- Ask a buddy to help prepare questions and help you prepare for the appointment
- Ask a buddy to help remind you about symptoms or details you may have forgotten.
- Share details about how to join the call with your buddy



Your Virtual Appointment Experience

To make the most of your appointment, conduct a final check about 15 minutes before the appointment.

- Close computer windows and programs not being used for the appointment
- Mute yourself when you are not talking
- Be in a well lit, quiet area without distractions with reliable internet



When Is Virtual Care Not an Option?

The doctor will likely wish to evaluate you in person if you experience a sudden onset or worsening of symptoms that would suggest an emergency or caused by traumatic injury.

- Heart problems such as chest pain, heart palpitations, racing of the heart, passing out
- Breathing problems such as shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, coarse breath sounds
- Central nervous system issues such as loss of vision or hearing, weakness or numbness
- Signs of infection such as pain, tenderness, or swelling, abnormally high or low temperature
- Prolonged diarrhea or vomiting

To learn more, visit us at www.barthysyndrome.org