



Teledentistry Guide

While the thought of adding teledentistry services can be daunting, it doesn't need to be. With the right technology and processes in place, implementing teledentistry is really no different than your other elective services.

The most important thing you can do when practicing teledentistry is to treat every virtual visit like an in-person one. Be courteous, be attentive, over-communicate and ensure the patient feels completely at ease. While you may not have to turn over an operator for every patient, you should be mindful that your virtual space is orderly. Remember, teledentistry visits are subject to HIPAA governance, meaning you still need to be protective of any PHI and PII.

With every successful virtual consultation, you increase the probability of growing your remote business. The goal is for patients to walk away feeling no different than they would have had they come into the office. Your teledentistry services forge an added layer of trust between you and your patients.

1. ADVANTAGES

2. SETUP

3. BEST PRACTICES

4. VIRTUAL VISIT

5. INSURANCE

6. WORKFLOW

PART 1

Teledentistry Advantages



Teledentistry Advantages

Safety

In the midst of COVID-19, it's irrefutable that teledentistry is safer. You can treat and prescribe from afar, mitigating a lot of the risk tethered to the coronavirus. Once we're past this global pandemic, safety will still be at the forefront of our collective mind.

Words like immunocompromised and social distancing will not go away. As such, you can provide an added layer of protection to any patients who may have immunodeficiencies. Regardless of how sterile your practice is, you'll also offer them peace of mind.

Save On Costs

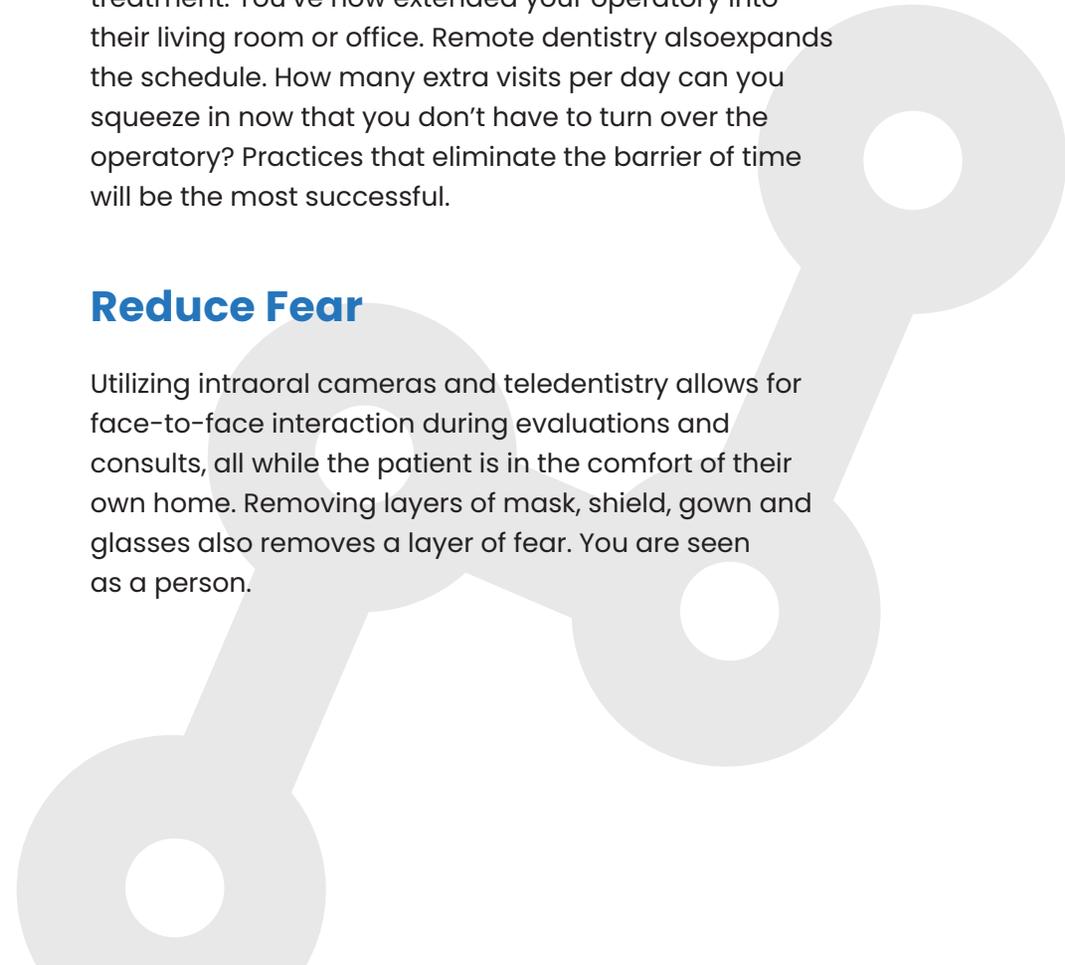
Again, with COVID-19 dominating our current life, there's a broad discussion about the severe lack of PPE. But let's look beyond COVID-19 and dive into the hard financials of your practice with the money you can save on PPE thanks to virtual visits. Every virtual consult will save how many masks and gloves? There is certainly an economical trickle-down effect with telehealth.

Greater Accessibility

Teledentistry removes a large barrier of entry: time. Outside of money, time is probably the largest barrier to entry for any patient, with many struggling to fit a dental visit into their increasingly packed schedule. By offering a digital option, patients who are too slammed to commute to the office can still receive your great treatment. You've now extended your operatory into their living room or office. Remote dentistry also expands the schedule. How many extra visits per day can you squeeze in now that you don't have to turn over the operatory? Practices that eliminate the barrier of time will be the most successful.

Reduce Fear

Utilizing intraoral cameras and teledentistry allows for face-to-face interaction during evaluations and consults, all while the patient is in the comfort of their own home. Removing layers of mask, shield, gown and glasses also removes a layer of fear. You are seen as a person.



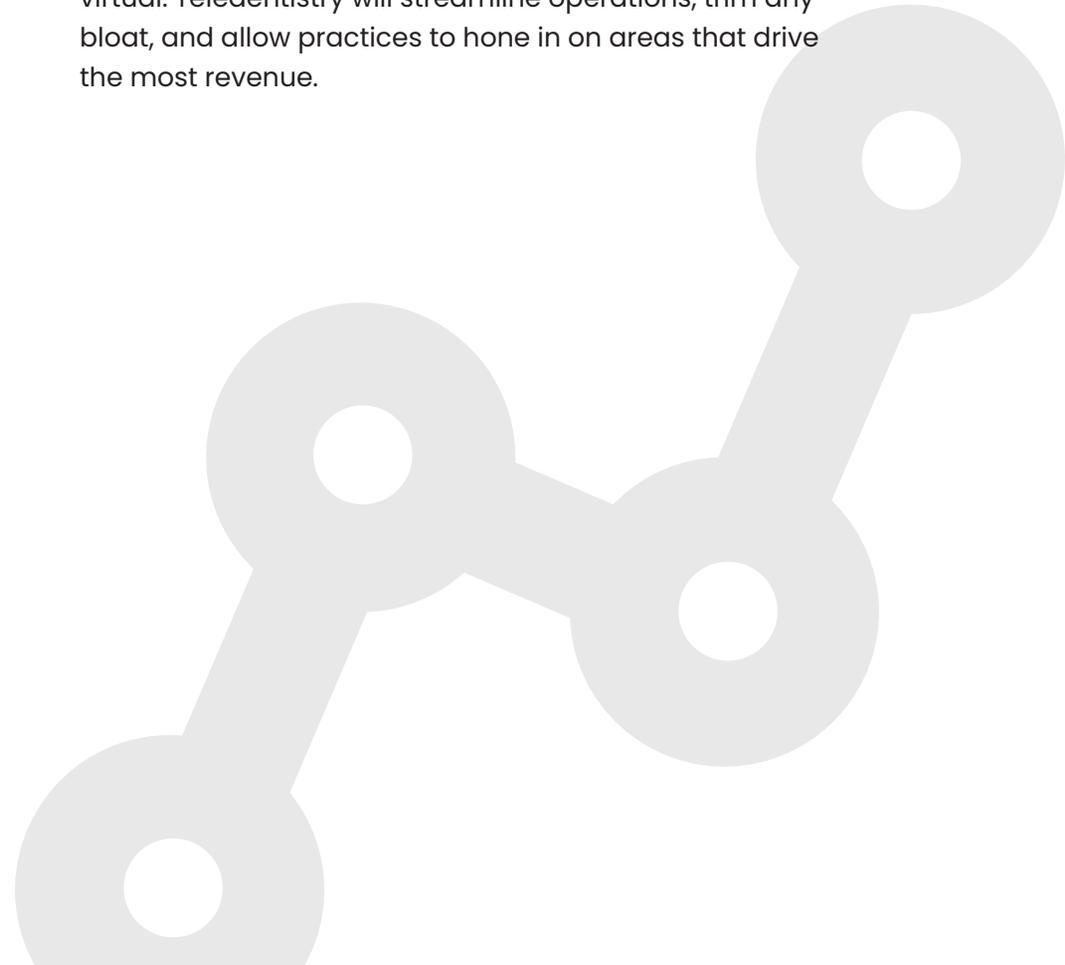
Teledentistry Advantages

Avoiding Dental Amnesia

Fear of the dentist often impacts the patient's ability to remember key parts of a conversation with the provider. Or it means questions they have don't get asked. The practice can send the evaluation results to a patient, along with a visual treatment plan with images. The treatment plan and finding can be discussed with a patient and/or decision maker, face-to-face.

New Revenue Stream

During the COVID-19 outbreak, teledentistry will be a necessity. Afterward, it will enable practices to get creative – to really stretch how they deliver care. Some practices will have complete remote services. They will move all triage and consultations to be performed remotely. Others will make all routine post-op visits virtual. Teledentistry will streamline operations, trim any bloat, and allow practices to hone in on areas that drive the most revenue.



PART 2

Setting Up Your Practice For Teledentistry

Like any other new service, teledentistry will cause some ripple effects across your practice. So long as you, your team, and your patients are prepared, the results will be positive. Like with all new treatments and procedures, it's best to have an airtight process in place before going full bore into remote work.

Effects On Dentist

As a dentist, you will be delivering the bulk of your practice's teledentistry services. You must confidently devote the same level of care to remote visits as you otherwise would.

Questions to ask the dentist:

1. Can I easily adapt to new technologies?
2. Do I feel comfortable talking to patients and my team through the technical aspects of teledentistry?
3. Am I comfortable talking to a camera?
4. Can I professionally talk to patients while not in the same room and still put them at ease?
5. Do I get nervous when a camera is directed on me?
6. Do patients enjoy my chairside manner when I see them in person?
7. Am I comfortable that my disposition will be the same when performing remote care?
8. Do I believe that teledentistry will truly make a difference in my patients' oral health?
9. Do I know when to bring a remote patient in for an in-person appointment?
10. Am I prepared to block off time on my schedule for video consultations?
11. Do I have enough time in my week to devote solely to teledentistry?

| TIP: Practice with family, neighbors and team members before holding a live remote visit with any patients.

Effects On The Team

What team members will aid teledentistry visits and are they capable of doing so? Teledentistry isn't a solo act. Your team will be involved at some point. So, who all will this new service touch? Even more important; are they equipped to handle it?

Questions to ask the team:

1. Is the team good with our current tech stack?
2. Can the team quickly pick up on new technologies?
3. Are they able to troubleshoot tech issues for patients?
4. Can the team work together to hand off a video call from one person to another?
5. If an issue comes up, can the team work together to reach a solution quickly?
6. Can the team talk to a patient through a teledentistry visit?
7. From scheduling and starting the visit, can the team help patients not feel self-conscious?
8. Can the front office team lead the process from appointment to the visit to billing?
9. Who from the front office will be involved in virtual visits?
10. Is the back office team adaptable?
11. Can they make sure patients understand post-appointment and billing procedures?
12. Who from the back office will be involved in virtual visits?

| TIP: Train each team member on the specific role they will perform during a virtual visit and then practice with each member.

Effects On Patients

Do you have a patient base that is ready, willing and able to embrace virtual visits? While teledentistry might be a wonderful option for your entire office, its success depends on your patients. Is this something your patients will embrace?

Ask yourself these questions about your patient base:

1. If we send our patients a link to a video visit, do we think they can open it without any issues?
Are our patients comfortable with the idea of teledentistry?
2. Do our patients feel comfortable receiving text messages and emails from our practice?
3. Do most of our patients receive text reminders?
4. How much of our treatment requires consultations, and can they easily be done virtually?
5. Do our patients request a high volume of elective services?
6. Do we have a heavy emergency flow?
7. Do we feel like teledentistry will help our emergency triage?
8. Are our patients comfortable with emergency teledentistry?
9. Do we accept online billing?
10. Do our patients know that they can pay online?
11. How comfortable will patients feel performing an entire visit without a personal visit?

| TIP: Get patients excited for virtual visits by emailing a video of the entire team welcoming this exciting new feature.

Effects On The Practice

Is your physical infrastructure set up to deliver virtual treatment with no hiccups? Is the infrastructure of your practice set up to physically support teledentistry? Things like Wi-Fi and good lighting make a big difference when it comes to virtual visits.

IT things to consider:

1. How strong is our Wi-Fi signal?
2. Are there any parts of the office where our signal is weak?
3. Do we drop calls frequently?
4. Can the entire team quickly adapt and add new services and processes without any lost time?
How often does our practice add new services?
5. Do we have a private room with a nice backdrop that looks professional?
6. Does the room have good lighting to make the video clear?
7. Do we accept online payments?
8. Can patients request appointments online?
9. Do we have the tools for patients to complete an end-to-end remote visit?
10. Do we see ourselves adding short consultative appointments to blocks on the schedule?
11. How long will we try teledentistry before determining if it works for our patients/team?

TIP: Dedicate a place in your office to teledentistry, making sure the Wi-Fi is great and there are no distractions.

PART 3

Best Practices For Teledentistry Integration



Determine Protocol

Map out every scenario, like you would for a brick-and-mortar process, and then coach your team on it.

Run test visits before going live.

What services do you provide remotely?

Is there anything that must be done in-house?

What team members have a hand in virtual visits?

What does a virtual visit even look like?

From there, evolve and enhance. Be vigilant with patient surveys and reviews. Take feedback to heart and learn what you can improve upon.

Try This Exercise: Frame teledentistry against in-person consultation.



Now take all the ways the two are the same (scheduling, confirmations, follow-ups, etc.) and remove those from the table. Look at the differences (location, hand-off, etc.), and understand how they'll impact your team. Train your team on the nuances with this new service (billing codes, for example), and then start rolling out your remote treatment. So long as you understand how teledentistry impacts your whole team and continue treating patients with empathy, you'll do great!

Configure Your Schedule

Every practice has its own scheduling technique; just make sure this folds neatly into what currently works for you.

1. When do you allow virtual visits?

2. All day? Only mornings? From 3–5 each day? After hours on Wednesdays?

3. Are you comfortable filling gaps in the schedule with virtual visits, or are they only to be held at a specific time?

4. Should every virtual visit be blocked for the same amount of time, or are there different tiers?

5. How does your team schedule a virtual visit? In other words, can patients call in to schedule, or is it just through an appointment request on your site?

Define a Space for Virtual Dentistry

Now that you have an idea of the space virtual visits will fill on your schedule, understand the physical space where you'll hold them. A best practice is to have an exam room dedicated to virtual visits. This way, you can have the necessary technology in place and are set up for success. If at-home, dedicate a select part of your residence for these consults.

Ensure Documentation

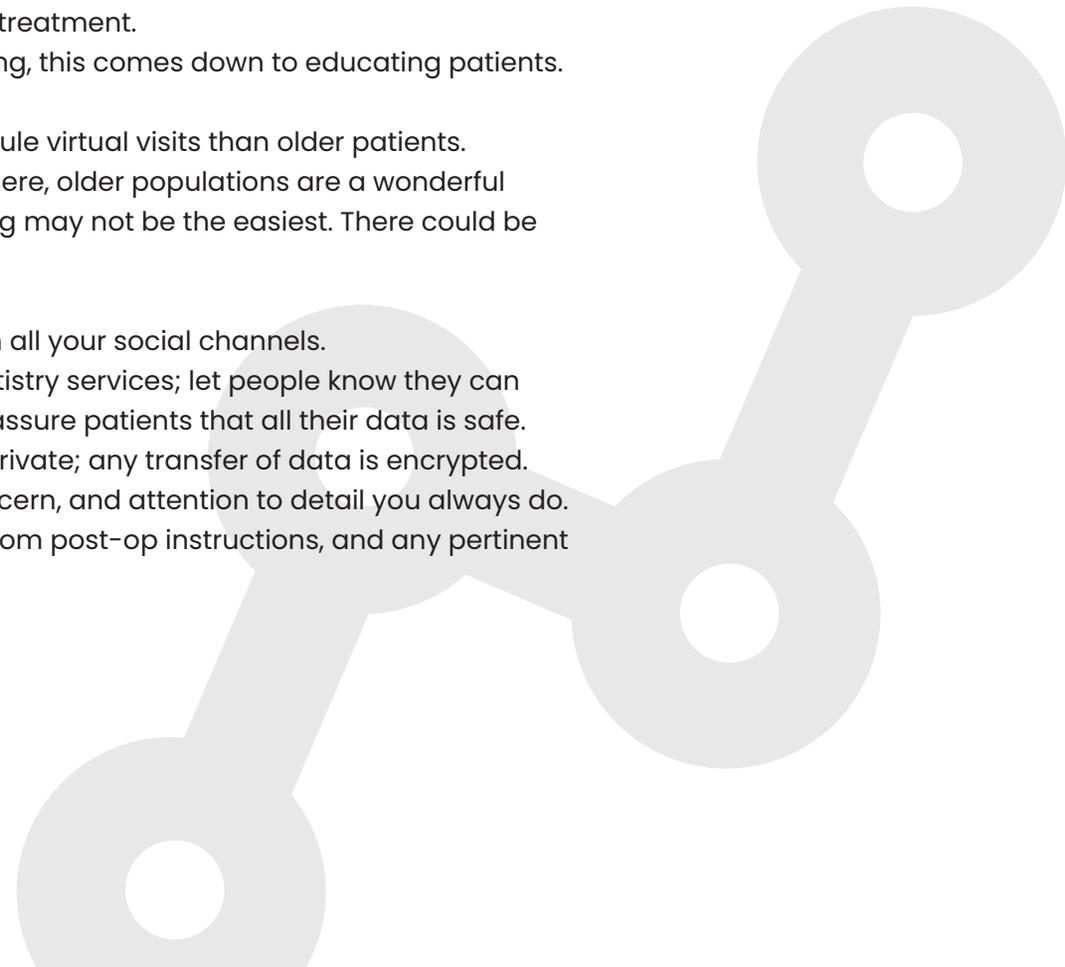
Since these are still visits to your practice, they must be documented in your PMS. Set up your documentation process, accounting for any billing or prescription services. This step folds into your greater process planning. How does a patient check in and out for their virtual visit?

Helping Patients Embrace Teledentistry

Marketing virtual visits is really no different than selling a whitening treatment. Once people know it's an option, they'll embrace it. As with everything, this comes down to educating patients.

A prevailing thought is younger patients are more inclined to schedule virtual visits than older patients. To them, the world has always been online. And while there's truth here, older populations are a wonderful demographic for remote dentistry. Mobility could be an issue, driving may not be the easiest. There could be significant health issues extending beyond oral health.

Teledentistry should have a strong presence on your website and in all your social channels. Text, email, and share across social networks that you offer teledentistry services; let people know they can schedule a remote visit the same way they would an in-person. Reassure patients that all their data is safe. All matters discussed still fall under HIPAA. Your conversations are private; any transfer of data is encrypted. Implement digital forms, and during visits show the same care, concern, and attention to detail you always do. Afterward, keep sending automatic treatment plan follow-ups, custom post-op instructions, and any pertinent billing info.



PART 4

Examples Of Virtual Visits



Examples Of Virtual Visits

Creating Trust With A Smile

Dental professionals are struggling with additional PPE requirements. It is difficult to greet patients when it feels so impersonal. Maybe it is a new patient or maybe a returning patient who you only see in times of emergencies. One of the many benefits of teledentistry is the ability to maintain that personal patient connection face-to-face. A smile brightens every day and anxiety-free and personal interaction can create lifetime patients.

Pre-Treatment Consultations (Increase Case Acceptance)

Prior to an in-office visit, teledentistry offers an excellent way to establish rapport with the patient, give the patient information to be an informed buyer, and increase case acceptance once the patient visits the office. By the time the patient presents at the office, the patient already has established a relationship with the dentist, is knowledgeable about the treatment process, and there is no sticker shock regarding the fee. Case acceptance is almost assured.

Live Video Visits

Think of it like the FaceTime of dentistry. You and a patient hop on a call for a live video consultation. This scenario means there's a real-time, two-way flow of information. This could potentially avoid wasting precious appointment time on those who are simply shopping.

Group Practices & DSOs

Communicate with new associates to brainstorm treatment plan ideas. Communicate with the Clinical Director to review training protocols and complex case planning. Showcase exceptional treatment outcomes. DSOs and group practices often have specialists who rotate among offices in different locations. But what happens when the periodontist or oral surgeon is in a particular location on Mondays and Wednesdays, but you have an implant candidate sitting in the chair on Tuesday? Teledentistry enables any office within the group to schedule a clinician or patient consultation with specialists no matter where they might be, even if they're not in any office setting. The result is enhanced operational efficiency, increased case acceptance, improved patient experience, and a consistent standard of care.

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Specialist Co-Diagnosing

Remove the referral burden from the patient. Complete the trust transfer by letting the patient know they have a care team. For example, a patient who comes in for digital impressions is referred out to a specialist. Rather than having to visit the specialist in person, the patient can fire up a virtual visit and have their consultation there. Or, a patient can upload x-rays from one practitioner to the patient portal with a new provider.

From there, the new dentist can diagnose treatment remotely. Build the trust for periodontist, pedodontist, endodontist, orthodontist, prosthodontist, and sleep medicine specialists. Complete the trust transfer by letting the patient know they have a care team.

GP To Specialist

A periodontist received notification that one of her referring GPs had shared some type of information about a patient in her secure teledentistry software. She followed the link in the email and opened the file, the GP had recorded a short video. The periodontist scheduled a video conference with the patient for a case presentation. Using her teledentistry software, she also invited the referring GP to participate. Trust was built and the patient scheduled.

Virtual Study Clubs

Upload diagnostic records into a secure teledentistry software and invite study club members to view the records. The software allows the members to comment and/or ask questions. Invite the study club members to a live-streaming video conference.

Examples Of Virtual Visits

Clear Aligner Example

The patient schedules a virtual consultation in the convenience of their own home with a teledentistry appointment. The patient will use the secure portal prior to the scheduled appointment to:

- 1. Upload a full-face smiling photo and a profile photo (or any photos the dentist desires).**
- 2. View an educational video about the clear aligner treatment process that is shared by the office through the portal.**
- 3. The dentist can then triage the patient to filter out any potential non-candidates and “shoppers”.**

Hygiene Appointments

Patients receive hygiene care by the dental hygienist. Hygienist captures new diagnostic data, such as intraoral photos, x-rays, charting and updated patient info for in-office teledentistry review by dentist, completing the periodic exam via teledentistry.

Visual Treatment Plans

Through a secure patient portal, dentists digitally share a visual treatment plan with the patient post-appointment. They can attach a video of themselves providing a case presentation or schedule a live video consultation to discuss treatment options.

Implant Consultations

The patient schedules a virtual consultation in the convenience of their own home with a teledentistry appointment. The patient will use the secure portal prior to the scheduled appointment to:

- 1. Upload a full-face smiling photo and a profile photo (or any photos the dentist desires).**
- 2. View an educational video about the implant treatment process that is shared by the office through the portal.**
- 3. The dentist can then triage the patient to filter out any potential non-candidates and “shoppers”.**

Examples Of Virtual Visits

Post-Procedure Check-In

Through a secure patient portal, dentists virtually view the patients progress after extensive procedures, provide post-op instructions and ensure that the patient is healing within normal limits.

Remote Patient Monitoring

In this scenario, a patient may take pictures of their broken appliance ailment and share with the dentist. They may not be available for real-time consultation, but they can securely share their questions or needs.

Dentist Shortage Program

Coverage during maternity leave, coverage when waiting for onboarding a new dentist, contract with a dentist to keep hygiene coverage to maintain current patients during the hiring shortage.



PART 5

Insurance Considerations

When adding a new service to your practice, some of the first questions you should ask is: How will I get paid? What's reimbursable? What's FFS? And/or what's included in your membership program? Teledentistry is no different in this regard, though there are some nuances when it comes to reimbursements.

There are two specific teledentistry CDT codes. When coding for teledentistry, it must be added alongside an Oral Evaluation or Case Management code. Teledentistry codes are sometimes considered administrative and not subject to reimbursement. However, in some instances, like the COVID-19 pandemic, these codes have been reimbursed.

Prior to beginning your teledentistry services, contact primary payers to ensure you're in compliance for any billing procedures. Beyond that, ensure that your management software is set up to bill and receive payment for teledentistry codes.

D9995

Synchronous Teledentistry

Real-time encounter, reported in addition to other procedures delivered to the patient on the date of service.

D9996

Asynchronous Treatment

Information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review, reported in addition to other procedures delivered to the patient on the date of service.

D9992

Dental Case Management

Helping patients coordinate oral care services across multiple providers and types, specialty treatment areas, health care settings and organizations, and payment systems.

SCENARIO 1

Patient contact with dentist who provides the consultation using audio means only.

CODING:

D0190 (screening)
D0999

SCENARIO 2

Patient contact with dentist who provides the problem focused evaluation using audio and visual means.

CODING:

D0140
D0170
D0171

SCENARIO 3

Patient contact with triage call center who then forwards to dentist who provides the problem focused evaluation using audio and visual means.

CALL CENTER CODING:

D0190 (screening)
D0999

DENTIST CODING:

D0140 or **D0170** or **D0171**

SCENARIO 4

Patient contact with dentist who then forwards to specialist who provides the problem-focused evaluation using audio and visual means. The referring dentist can be a GP or a specialist who is referring to other specialists.

GP DENTIST CODING:

D0190 (screening) or **D0999**

GP OR SPECIALIST CODING:

D0140 or **D0170** or **D0171**

Combine Scenarios 1-4 with Teledentistry Codes

In all scenarios above, the relevant teledentistry code should be included.

D9995: Real-time synchronous, live audio and video communication.

D9996: Asynchronous, or 'store and forward' communication such as secure patient portal messages or cloud-based review of diagnostic imagery.

PART 6

Create A Workflow



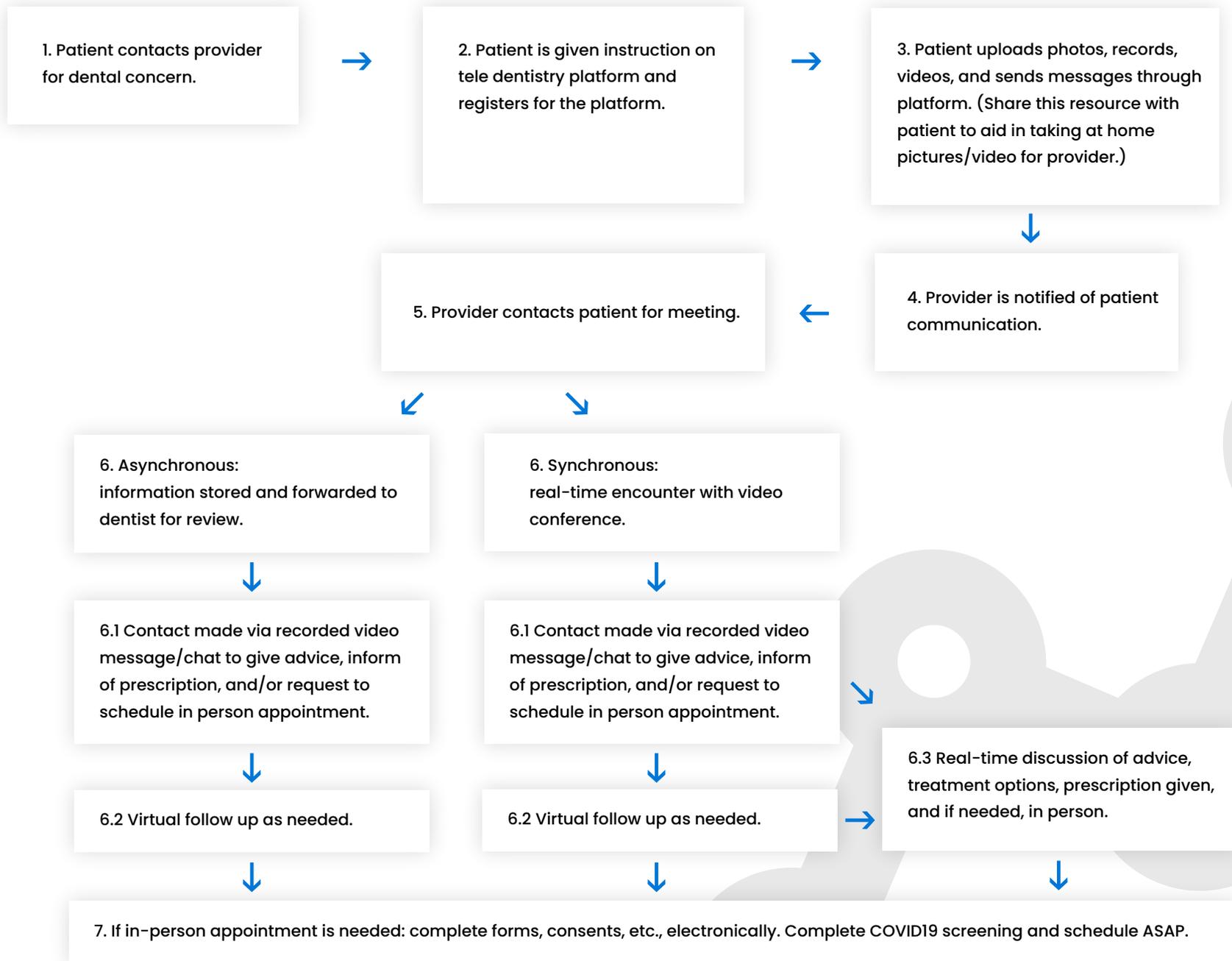
Appointment Checklist

- Turn off phone and all ambient sounds
- Verify patient's identity
- Capable Software, Laptop/Tablets
- Hotspot/Wi-Fi/5G
- Camera and Mirrors
- New Consent Forms
- Explain that anyone present will be on camera
- Confirm you are recording the visit
- Ask patient same questions you would in-person
- Determine if/when in-person follow-up is needed
- Discuss post-op communications
- Explain how patient will be billed
- Thank patient for their time

Sample Workflow

- | Send email/text announcing TD
- | Schedule applicable appointments
- | Email and text confirmation instructions
- | Include digital forms in confirmation
- | Have the remote visit
- | Email post-op and payment instructions
- | Patient pays online
- | Email or text a review of the visit

Teledentistry Workflow





CULTIVATING GROWTH