

Virtual Physical Exam

Virtual physical exams are growing in popularity due to their convenience for the patient and organization, especially when national or global pandemics arise. Look at the tips below to help make virtual physical exams easier.

Try It Out:

- Check out the Video Visit tip sheet for more ideas

Tips for Success

1. Ensure the patient is comfortable with everyone in the room, particularly if clothing will need to be removed during the exam
 - Ask others to leave when appropriate
2. Confirm privacy in the room and glare
 - Ask for window blinds to be closed before beginning the visit
3. Explain the video visit is not recorded. It cannot be posted anywhere
4. Split the history and exam into distinct parts due to conversation and participation
5. Talk the patient/ parent through the exam
 - engage cooperation from patient and parent
 - acknowledge and confirm the exam will feel different than an in-person exam at first
 - Ask the patient and their parent to shine a light, move closer to the camera or farther away, remove objects in the way of your view, speak more loudly, etc.
 - Direct them to remove clothing as necessary, remember to tell them when it is ok to put their clothing back on
6. Tell the patient and their parent how to do exam maneuvers you would usually perform, encouraging their participation
 - For example, how to palpate for pain
 - perform range of motion maneuvers
 - Describe landmarks you use in clinic to find the right location for an exam component, such as ribs or pelvic bone
7. Watch carefully, ask to repeat anything questionable
8. Verbalize what you think you are seeing, allowing the patient and their parent to clarify as needed
9. Refer to in-person care if the video exam is not adequate for medical decision-making

System by System Suggestions:

1. Obtain/ review vitals and perform medication reconciliation as needed
2. General:
 - do everything as if it was an in-person visit
3. Eyes:
 - conjunctivitis, discharge, EOM, +/- icterus
4. HENT:
 - head size/ shape, palpate for pain, nasal discharge, lip cracking, dysmorphic facies, +/- oropharynx (breath may fog camera)
5. Neck:
 - range of motion, suppleness
6. Lungs:
 - work of breathing, audible breath sounds, dyspnea
7. CV:
 - mostly limited to signs of perfusion/ cap refill
8. Abdomen:
 - pain on palpation and with jumping, guarding, +/- distension (look from side)
9. MSK:
 - large joint swelling or erythema (looking at rt/lt side together with a camera closeup, asymmetry is easier to detect visually), edema, deformity, talk patient/ parent through maneuvers to detect pain or decreased range of motion
10. Skin:
 - do everything as if it was an in-person visit
 - Consider asking them to send photos via MyChart message if camera motion artifact is affecting quality
11. Neuro:
 - alertness, gait, asymmetric movements when reaching for a toy or kicking feet, finger-nose-finger, many cranial nerves, gross motor/sensory
12. Psych/ Behavioral:
 - do everything as if it was an in-person visit