CARE Connection

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Home Health or Outpatient Therapy

Home Health or Outpatient Therapy?

What's the Difference?



Both can provide rehabilitation services, but Home Health and outpatient therapy are different types of care with different eligibility requirements, settings and coverage considerations.

	HOME HEALTH (Therapy Comes to You)	OUTPATIENT THERAPY (You Go to Therapy)
WHERE CARE HAPPENS	In your home (or a skilled nursing facility, if needed).	At a therapy clinic, hospital outpatient department, or rehabilitation center (PT, OT and/or speech therapy).
WHO QUALIFIES	Must meet home-health eligibility requirements, including generally being homebound and needing skilled care.	Does not require homebound status. You can attend if you're medically stable and able to get to the clinic (or receive outpatient services in the home, if available).
WHAT SERVICES CAN BE PROVIDED	May include skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and other qualifying home-health services.	Physical therapy, occupational therapy and/or speech therapy based on your medical need and the provider's services.
HOW CARE IS STRUCTURED	A coordinated plan of care, often involving multiple disciplines (e.g., nurse, PT, OT, speech therapist).	Focused rehabilitation services with individualized treatment plans, typically several times per week.
INSURANCE & COVERAGE	Covered under the Medicare home-health benefit (and many private insurance plans) when eligibility requirements are met.	Covered under the Medicare outpatient therapy benefit (and many private insurance plans) based on medical necessity and plan details. May have copays or deductibles.

Good to Know

In some communities, outpatient therapy may also be offered in the home through a mobile provider. This is different from Home Health. Ask how the service is classified and billed.

Questions to Ask

1. Am I receiving Home Health or outpatient therapy?
2. Do I need to be homebound for this service?
3. What will my insurance cover, and will I have a copay or other out-of-pocket cost?

The right setting may change as you recover.

Some people begin with Home Health and transition to outpatient therapy as leaving home becomes easier and their rehabilitation needs change.

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