

Health Care In The Palm of Your Hand



BY AVERA STAFF WRITERS

Do you need to see a doctor for an ache or pain? There's an app for that. AveraNow is a new mobile video doctor visit that can take place over a smartphone, tablet or computer.

AveraNow is offered by Avera as part of its growing direct-to-consumer, easy access points of care. Appointments are \$49, payable by debit or credit card and are available to all consumers in Avera's service area.

The service is available 24/7 for

patients as young as age 2 into adulthood.

"AveraNow gives people on-demand access to health care. The service is not limited to Avera patients," said Tad Jacobs, DO, Chief Medical Officer for Avera Medical Group.

AveraNow's free mobile app is offered through the iTunes App Store, Google Play and other Android-based app distributors. Or, consumers can connect by logging onto a special



TAD JACOBS, DO

web page at Avera.org/Now.

When consumers connect for a visit, they fill out a questionnaire about symptoms, current medications and pertinent health history. AveraNow is appropriate for minor illnesses, such as colds, flu, bronchitis, allergy problems, rashes and sore throat. Most appointments last about 10 minutes.

Patients will get a real-time, two-way video visit with an Avera doctor or advanced practice provider. Some online health services treat patients without actually "seeing" them, based on their questionnaire and a phone conversation. Two-way video enhances the experience and provides better, safer care.

AveraNow providers follow evidence-based care protocols for high quality care. Providers review medical histories, answer questions, make diagnoses and prescribe medications, excluding controlled substances. If a visit is not appropriate for AveraNow, for example, anything requiring lab tests, X-rays or hands-on care, consumers are advised to go to primary care, urgent care or an emergency department for their care.

Tractica, a market intelligence firm that focuses on human interaction with technology, reports that home health technologies like AveraNow will increase from 14.3 million

worldwide in 2014 to 78.5 million by 2020. Data show that telemedicine, like video visits, can deliver quality outcomes comparable to in-person clinic visits. And on average, patients report a 96 percent satisfaction rate with this mode of health care delivery.

Market demand and patient satisfaction are also driven by the low cost of video visits. In fact, telehealth is one of the most cost-effective ways to see a doctor. The emergency room is the most expensive and least efficient way to provide non-emergent care, costing from \$1,500 to \$3,000 on average compared to \$130 to \$190 for a clinic visit, according to a 2011 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An AveraNow visit will be \$49.

"Access to a telemedicine provider can prevent an ER visit on a Saturday night or prevent the need to arrange travel, childcare, or time off from work for an office visit during the week," said Jacobs. "While AveraNow is not designed to replace the need for a relationship with a primary care physician, it can serve as a convenient and cost-effective option."

Visit Avera.org/Now to learn more.

Health matters Find the Best Way to Connect With an Avera Provider



Tad Jacobs, DO

TAD JACOBS, DO
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
AVERA MEDICAL GROUP

You lead a busy lifestyle that doesn't leave you with much downtime. We realize that convenience is important when you

or your family members need medical care.

Today, you have multiple options for receiving medical care from Avera's skilled providers. You can receive care through a variety of ways: primary care clinics (during business hours), emergency care, after-hours and convenience clinics, and AveraNow.

With AveraNow — our new 24/7 service that allows you to chat face-to-face with a provider via smartphone, laptop or tablet — we're here for you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You now have access to Avera providers any time of day from virtually any location.

No matter where you seek treatment from Avera, our goal is for you to reach the right care provider for your particular condition. For example, you wouldn't want to engage AveraNow with life-threatening chest pain. Conversely, if you have a sore throat, the ER is the most expensive place to get care and may have the longest wait time. So for a sore throat, AveraNow would be perfect.

It's helpful to know the differences between urgent care and AveraNow. AveraNow is a great option for people who need a quick visit where they are, have limited mobility or who can't fit a clinic visit into their busy schedules. While both AveraNow and urgent care clinics treat a variety of issues, urgent care clinics treat a wider range of issues, such as sprains and lacerations, and have capabilities to do lab tests and X-rays. Remember, though, that urgent care clinics have set hours.

Your safety is always our No. 1

priority. If we can manage your care safely on an AveraNow visit, we'll do that. But depending on your issue, we may ask you to seek another level of care, such as urgent care.

Learn more about the best way to connect with an Avera provider:

Use AveraNow for problems such as:

- Sinus infections
- Upper respiratory ailments
- Coughs
- Urinary tract infections
- Eye infections
- Sore throat
- Skin rash
- Earaches

Use Avera's Urgent Care for conditions such as:

- Infections: ear, throat, urinary
- Sore throat, fever
- Breathing difficulty: asthma, croup
- Non-severe lacerations or cuts
- Pains: back, stomach, shoulder
- Headache with history of migraines

Go to the Emergency Department or call 911 for problems such as:

- Chest pain/pain in arm or jaw
- Head trauma
- Pregnancy complications
- Serious cuts/lacerations/burns
- Seizures
- Possible broken bones
- Shortness of breath/trouble breathing
- Severe headaches in patient with no history of headache
- Heavy bleeding

If you need emergency care, call 911.

BIO ABOUT THE WRITER

Tad Jacobs, DO, is Chief Medical Officer for Avera Medical Group. He began his medical practice in 1982 as a rural family practice physician. He enjoyed practicing family medicine in Flandreau for 28 years before taking on an administrative role with Avera Health.

Backpacks vs. Kids' Backs



BY ALYSSA KUECKER
AVERA HEALTH

Ever heard of the phrase "the weight of the world on your shoulders"?

OK, so kids may not be carrying the weight of the world's worries, but a heavy backpack on a young child is something to worry about.

"Heavy, ill-fitting backpacks not only cause back, neck and shoulder pain, but sometimes numbness and tingling in the arms and hands can occur when narrow straps dig into the shoulders," said Brian Wienk, PT, ScD, COMT, Avera Physical Therapist. "A heavy backpack may affect a young child's balance, increasing the risk of a fall."

Using only one strap puts unnecessary strain on the child's musculoskeletal alignment. Usually, he or she will compensate for the weight of the backpack by lowering one shoulder and raising one hip higher.

"You'll also see kids leaning forward at the waist, which may strain back or neck muscles and often results in a forward head posture," said Wienk.

One common concern among parents is the risk of scoliosis, or a curve in the spine. Wienk stressed that heavy backpacks don't cause scoliosis.

Knowing how much your child's body can safely carry is a good place to start.

"According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, carrying 10 to 20 percent of the child's weight is acceptable," said Wienk. Because younger children have less muscle strength, Wienk recommends aiming toward the lower end of the scale. That means if a child is 60 pounds, his backpack should only weigh about 12 pounds, and more preferably, 6 pounds.

Here are more tips for managing

heavy backpacks and preventing symptoms:

1. Invest in a backpack with wider, padded straps. Avoid rolling backpacks which are hard to maneuver on steps and can cause kids to trip.
2. Make sure your child wears both straps over the shoulders instead of one.
3. Adjust the backpack so it sits center of your child's back — not too high and not too low.
4. Teach your child to place textbooks and heavier objects in the bag so they sit closer to his or her back. This distributes the load evenly and supports his or her center of gravity.
5. Fasten the waist belt around the tummy. This ensures the backpack stays close to your child's body.
6. Encourage your child to exercise regularly to build up abdominal, buttock and back strength.
7. Remind your child to stand tall and sit tall. Be a role model, and demonstrate these actions yourself.
8. Talk to the teacher. He or she can help your child decide which books and materials are needed for homework — rather than grabbing everything!

If your child complains about pain, numbness or tingling, see an expert.

"Physical therapists are movement specialists trained to examine posture, range of motion, muscle strength and balance. We prescribe patient-specific exercises to rehabilitate and strengthen back and neck muscles," said Wienk. "Avera uses a team approach, meaning you're connected to spine rehabilitation experts, pain management physicians and surgeons, if needed."

This year, start school right by resolving backpack drama early so your child can focus on learning and friendships.



Live better. Live balanced. Avera.
Avera.org/live