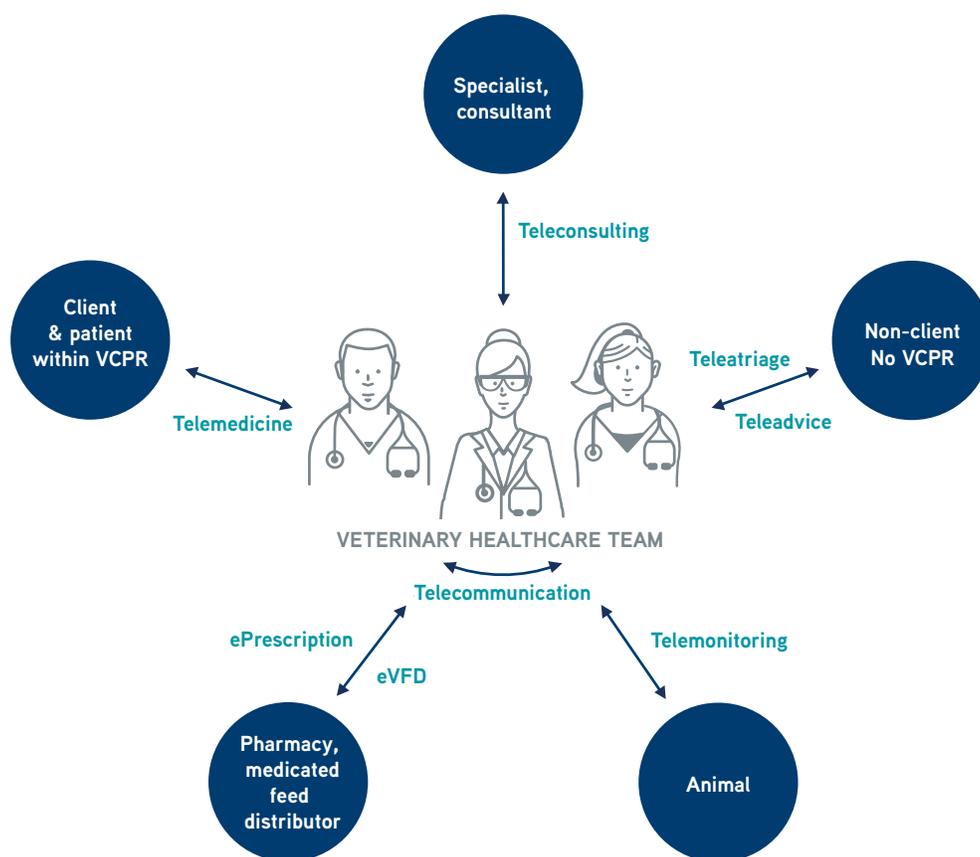


# Talking about telehealth

## CONVERSE LIKE A PRO



Many terms are used when talking about telehealth. While they are related, each has a specific meaning.

**Telehealth** is the use of technology to remotely gather and deliver health information, advice, education, and patient care. Telehealth is divided into categories based on who is involved in the communication. For communication between veterinarians and animal owners there are two important categories that are distinguished by whether a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) has been established.

- General advice, educational information, and teletriage are aspects of telehealth that may be delivered without an already established VCPR.
- Telemedicine includes the delivery of information specific to a particular patient and requires that a VCPR be established.

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**Teleadvice** includes providing any health information, opinion, guidance that is not specific to an animal patient's health, illness, or injury. This general advice is not intended to diagnose, prognose, or treat a patient's (or group of patients') physical or mental illness or injury. A VCPR is not required.

**Example:** Members of the veterinary healthcare team make general recommendations about the importance of regular examinations, vaccination, and parasite prevention.

**Teletriage** is the safe, appropriate, and timely assessment and management (immediate referral to a veterinarian or not) of animal patients, under conditions of uncertainty and urgency, via electronic consultation with their owners. A diagnosis is not rendered, and a VCPR is not required.

**Example:** A veterinarian considers the owner's report of history and clinical signs and views a video of a patient to determine whether immediate referral to a veterinarian is needed.

**Telemedicine** uses telehealth tools to exchange information about a patient's clinical health status electronically from one site to another. A VCPR is required.

**Example:** The veterinarian uses technology to communicate with a client and visually observe the patient during a post-operative follow-up examination and discussion.

**Teleconsulting** refers to a primary care veterinarian using telehealth tools to communicate with a veterinary specialist or other qualified expert to gain insights and advice on the care of a patient.

**Example:** A veterinarian communicates electronically with a veterinary orthopedic surgeon regarding an equine patient with a fetlock injury.

**Telemonitoring** (or remote monitoring) uses digital technologies to collect and transmit health data from a patient in one location to the veterinarian in a different location for assessment and recommendations. Telemonitoring may be synchronous or asynchronous.

**Example:** A veterinarian evaluates glucose readings obtained from a wearable device affixed to a feline patient.

**ePrescribing/eVFD** is the electronic generation, transmission, and filling of a medical prescription or order. State and federal requirements, including those for prescribing controlled substances, apply.

**Example:** A veterinarian issues a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) with an electronic signature that authorizes use of a VFD drug or combination VFD drug in an animal feed.

**Tele-education** is the application of information and communication technologies to distance learning.

**Example:** A veterinary technician provides basic house/behavioral training for clients who are new pet owners by means of a live or recorded webinar.

For more resources, visit [avma.org/Telehealth](https://avma.org/Telehealth)

