

Phone call OK instead of visit for routine post-op follow-up

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(HealthDay)—A telephone visit can be safely substituted for the standard clinic visit as postoperative follow-up for certain types of ambulatory surgery, and most patients report a high degree of satisfaction, according to research published online on July 10 in *JAMA Surgery*.

Kimberly Hwa, M.M.S., P.A.-C., and Sherry M. Wren, M.D., of the Veterans Administration Health Care System in Palo Alto, Calif., conducted a prospective case series during a 10-month period to determine whether a telephone visit with an allied health professional

could be used as a substitute for an in-person clinic visit as postoperative follow-up for selected ambulatory surgical procedures.

The researchers found that, among 115 patients receiving open hernia repair and 26 patients receiving laparoscopic cholecystectomy, 110 patients (78 percent) were successfully contacted after surgery. Of those, 70.8 percent of hernia patients and 90.5 percent of cholecystectomy patients agreed to telehealth as the only method of postoperative follow-up. Among the telehealth patients, none experienced complications following cholecystectomy and 4.8 percent had complications following herniorrhaphy. Almost all patients were highly satisfied with telephone follow-up.

"In conclusion, this [pilot study](#) demonstrated that a scripted telehealth visit by an allied health professional can be safely and effectively used for the postoperative care of open herniorrhaphy and laparoscopic cholecystectomy patients," the authors write.

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