



kindbody

# **Connecting the Dots Between Virtual and In-Person Fertility Care:** A Guide for Employers

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# Introduction

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Since the COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine has become a regular part of how many people receive care, from getting a prescription for an antibiotic to speaking with a licensed therapist. Like a modern-day house call, telemedicine makes it easier for people to access care when and where they need it.

Of course, some kinds of care clearly can't be delivered virtually. At first glance, it may seem that fertility care would fall under this category. When most people think of fertility care, they think of in vitro fertilization (IVF) — a procedure conducted at a fertility clinic. But leading up to, during, and after fertility treatment, patients may have a variety of questions that can be answered in a virtual consultation. Getting answers to these questions in a timely — and accurate — manner can help patients get on the right treatment path sooner, better understand their care, and make the best decisions for themselves. **Without virtual resources, patients may delay care, start down the wrong treatment path, or struggle to get the help they need during treatment.**

Employers want to improve access to care for employees, reduce healthcare costs, and ensure all employees are healthy and productive. However, not all virtual care solutions offer the same level of care quality and integration with in-person support. That's one reason employers have become more skeptical of how transformative virtual care can be on “outcomes, quality, cost, experience, and integration,” [according to the 2024 Large Employer Health Care Strategy Survey](#) from Business Group on Health. Seventy percent of respondents reported feeling concerned about a siloed care experience for employees due to lack of coordination between virtual and community-based providers.

For employers looking for virtual and in-person fertility care for their employees, it can be challenging to navigate the different ways vendors frame their support. In this eBook, we share questions to ask that **get to the heart of what a solution is really offering so you can ensure your employees have access to integrated care that meets rigorous standards.** We'll also cover:

- When virtual care is — and isn't — appropriate during a fertility or family-building journey
- How providing access to virtual care helps employers meet diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals
- How providing access to both virtual and in-person care improves outcomes and reduces costs



## Chapter 1:

# The Benefits of Virtual-First Fertility Care

Unlike a checkup that requires in-person tests and measurements, the first consultation with a fertility doctor is typically a conversation. In fact, counseling and education make up a significant part of fertility care. All of these conversations can be held virtually.

A quick note on definitions: In telemedicine, unlike telehealth, a doctor can also order labs and prescriptions and give medical advice, not just information. Having labs ordered virtually can be especially helpful for patients who don't live near a fertility clinic. Instead of waiting to start initial testing at the clinic, a doctor can order initial tests for patients via telemedicine to complete at a nearby at a nearby in-network lab.

Taking these initial steps virtually with a board-certified doctor has several benefits for patients, starting with the most valuable commodity in fertility care: time.

## Benefit #1: Saving Precious Time

Fertility declines with age, and while a difference of a few weeks may not make an impact, months and years do. Most people seeking fertility care have already been trying to get pregnant for a year or more, and likely have experienced symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression

Helping patients access care sooner is also a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issue. Longer time to treatment is one key factor in the disparity in IVF success between white and Black patients. Black patients initiate infertility treatments (both IVF and non-IVF) on average 6–15 months later than white patients, largely due to a lack of financial and local access. Making it easy for patients to start care from home can start breaking down common barriers to access and improve equity.

## Virtual Care and Fertility: Five Use Cases

All fertility care doesn't have to take place in person. Here are five examples of consultations patients can have virtually and receive the same level of care they would in person:

### 1 **Introductory consultation for an heterosexual couple trying to get pregnant.**

Common first questions include, how long should a couple try to get pregnant before seeking fertility treatments? What tests should each member of the couple get to better understand their fertility? At this stage, a doctor can also order tests for the couple that they can complete at a local lab, rather than traveling to the fertility clinic in person.

### 2 **Educational conversation on timed intercourse and ovulation tracking.**

Because most people spend many years trying not to get pregnant, knowledge of fertility and pregnancy tends to be low. A doctor can share tips and dispel misconceptions about ovulation tracking tools, timing intercourse, and lifestyle changes that can improve the likelihood of pregnancy.

### 3 **Introductory consultation on options for a same-sex female couple.**

Navigating fertility care can feel overwhelming for same-sex couples, who are often without a blueprint. Through telemedicine, couples can get personalized guidance on where to start, such as how to find donor sperm, understanding reciprocal or co-IVF, and how to decide who will carry a pregnancy.

## Benefit #2: Improving Productivity

Fertility care is time consuming: one study found that over 18 months, the average time spent on fertility care was 125 hours, equating to 15.6 work days. Telemedicine is an effective way to help employees balance fertility care with their work responsibilities. In Kindbody's 2023 survey on employee productivity and fertility care, 75% said they would use PTO, sick days, or take unpaid time off for fertility treatments and/or appointments. Virtual care appointments are often available after work hours or on weekends, reducing the amount of PTO or unpaid time an employee needs to use to seek care.

## Benefit #3: Increasing Access to Care

Most people in the U.S. have limited access to high-quality fertility care. Many patients travel several hours for treatment. When the average person needs more than one round of IVF to get pregnant, time — and money — quickly add up. Being able to use telemedicine for appointments that don't require physical care can save patients a significant amount of travel time.

Care quality is another important factor in fertility treatment success. In addition to taking longer to start treatment, Black patients are less likely to access care at clinics with the best outcomes. Through virtual care, patients can start treatment with high-quality providers before traveling to their associated clinics and beginning in-person treatment with leading providers.

## Benefit #4: Reducing Costs

Fertility care is expensive, with a single round of IVF costing between \$12,000 and \$14,000 on average. An initial consultation costs individuals or insurers between \$350 and \$1,000. In contrast, a virtual appointment costs \$200.

In addition to reducing the costs of individual appointments, high-quality virtual care can also reduce long-term costs, as well. Research shows that fertility knowledge in the U.S. is low: in one study of women attending fertility clinics, only 2% correctly identified the fertile period in the menstrual cycle. This means that in some cases, a single educational conversation could help someone understand how to time intercourse, improve nutrition for better fertility, or address other underlying health issues that allow someone to get pregnant without intervention.

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### Consultation on fertility medication side effects during treatment.

Virtual care can also benefit patients during treatment. Patients can set up calls or send messages related to medication side effects, how to administer medications, and what to expect next in their treatment process.

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### Consultation on steps to take to improve health before pregnancy.

The best time to improve pregnancy outcomes starts before someone gets pregnant in the first place. A consultation on preparing for pregnancy might include guidance on tests to consider, like thyroid testing, advice on managing pre-existing conditions like diabetes, nutritional guidance, exercise guidelines, and more.



## Chapter 2:

# The Limits of Virtual-Only Fertility Care

When education isn't enough and a patient needs in-person care, ensuring continuity between virtual and in-person appointments is crucial. If a doctor doesn't have access to notes from a patient's virtual visits, patients may receive repetitive or conflicting information and need to explain their background to a new audience each time they receive care. **This is a common challenge for solutions that offer virtual only care and don't operate their own clinics.**

Disjointed fertility and maternity care are also less likely to improve maternal and birth outcomes. Research shows that when pregnant women have support from experts like doulas and midwives, care improves. But these experts should be part of an integrated, not disjointed, system of care.

While any expert can provide advice to a pregnant person on how to advocate for themselves during labor, without an integrated system, they don't have a way of knowing if a patient's preferences were ever communicated to their physician. On the other hand, with a fertility vendor that offers an integrated electronic medical record (EMR), all professionals a patient interacts with can see notes from conversations and get a complete picture of the patient's care.

Finally, when assessing fertility benefits vendors, it's important to take any promises related to outcomes with a grain of salt if the vendor does not provide in-person care or an interconnected care experience. Fertility treatments like IUI and IVF have an inevitable in-person component that has the most significant impact on outcomes. If a vendor does not manage clinics directly, their ultimate impact on outcomes is limited, especially if they're contributing to a disconnected care experience.

## Why Virtual-Only Care Hasn't Delivered

Employer confidence in the transformative power of virtual health has dropped, according to the [2024 Large Employer Health Care Strategy Survey from Business Group on Health](#). Employers are concerned about quality, continuity of care, and the sheer volume of solutions created confusion for employees.

At the same time, the report found that employers don't necessarily plan to reduce their investment in virtual health. In fact, employers report planning to increase telemedicine support for prenatal care and reproductive health will steadily increase between 2023 and 2024. While virtual health is here to stay, employers will closely evaluate their offerings to streamline options and find solutions that provide transparency, quality, and a better patient experience.

We've summarized several areas where employers feel virtual health hasn't delivered — and how Kindbody does things differently.

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### Siloed care experiences.

Seventy percent of respondents reported feeling concerned about a siloed care experience for employees due to lack of coordination between virtual and community-based providers.

### The Kindbody difference:

As the only fertility provider that owns and operates our own clinics, Kindbody is uniquely positioned to provide continuity of care between virtual and in-person visits, all captured in our proprietary Electronic Medical Record (EMR) technology.

# Advice for employers: What to look for in a virtual and in-person fertility benefit solution

Providing access to virtual care for fertility can help employers reduce costs, improve productivity, and empower employees to start their family-building journey. But not all virtual care providers connect employees with physicians who can actually deliver care — not just information. When considering fertility benefit vendors that offer virtual care, ask:

- **Do employees have access to telemedicine or only telehealth?**  
Ask whether providers can order labs, write prescriptions, and provide medical advice, or if they stick to educational resources.
- **How does the vendor ensure continuity of care between virtual and in-person care?**  
When an employee starts fertility care in person, does their doctor have access to notes from their virtual appointments?
- **What experts do employees have access to through telemedicine or telehealth?**  
Ask whether employees can speak to OB/GYNs, doulas, nutritionists, and other experts, and what kind of care each of those experts can and can't provide.
- **Do you operate your own clinics? How do you vet partner clinics? What support do pregnant employees have access to? Is that support available virtually?**  
A comprehensive solution should include support during pregnancy, as well, including help understanding symptoms, creating a birth plan, and recovering from delivery.
- **How can employees book appointments?**  
Being able to schedule appointments online is another way patients can save valuable time

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## Concerns about quality.

In the BGH report, 54% of respondents were concerned about the quality of care employees received virtually.

### The Kindbody difference:

At Kindbody, board-certified physicians deliver virtual and in-person care. No matter how a patient seeks care, they can trust that they're receiving medical advice from qualified professionals.

3

## Confusion about how and when to access virtual care.

With so many vendor options, employers are concerned that employees are unsure of which platforms to use when and may avoid them altogether. Care navigation services can help employees understand and access their options; 61% of employers may add an engagement platform by 2026.

### The Kindbody difference:

All Kindbody members have access to trained Care Navigators who help them understand their options and take the best next steps for them.

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## Lack of access to clinical data.

With several vendors in play, employers report that accessing clinical data and getting a clear picture of healthcare costs is challenging. Closing this gap is another opportunity for engagement platforms, the report notes.

### The Kindbody difference:

Kindbody's direct contracting, transparent pricing, and integration with existing health plans reduce costs and give employers insight into how employees are using their resources, both virtually and in person, and how Kindbody impacts outcomes.



## Chapter 3:

# How Kindbody provides continuity of care across virtual and in-person visits

As the only fertility solution that owns and operates our own clinics, Kindbody is uniquely positioned to support your employees wherever they are in the U.S. and in their fertility journey. By removing the middleman and serving as the direct provider of care, we provide a seamless continuum of care, decrease costs, improve the patient experience, and deliver better health outcomes.

## We Meet Your Employees Where They Are

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Fertility care is time consuming: one study found that over 18 months, the average time spent on fertility care was 125 hours, equating to 15.6 work days. Telemedicine is an effective way to help employees balance fertility care with their work responsibilities. In Kindbody's 2023 survey on employee productivity and fertility care, 75% said they would use PTO, sick days, or take unpaid time off for fertility treatments and/or appointments. Virtual care appointments are often available after work hours or on weekends, reducing the amount of PTO or unpaid time an employee needs to use to seek care.

## We Provide a Seamless Experience from Virtual to In-Person care

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When your employees are ready to receive in-person care, every Kindbody location is warm and welcoming and offers a full spectrum of fertility and family-building services—from fertility assessments, egg freezing, and IVF, to wellness, coaching, and preconception through postpartum care. As a result, we consistently deliver high patient satisfaction and 90+ NPS.

Kindbody's proprietary technology combines online scheduling for virtual and in-person appointments and a patient portal and EMR for increased standardization of care. Our HIPAA-compliant EMR allows for 24/7 communication so patients can securely message their doctor, chat with their embryologist, and access real-time insights into fertility assessments and blood test results any time of day or night.

Kindbody also provides support throughout pregnancy with our Kinddoula program. Members can get personalized guidance from certified doulas on topics like creating a birth plan, post-delivery self care, addressing common pregnancy symptoms, and more.

# Conclusion

## The path forward: virtual first, not virtual-only.

Virtual care — when provided by board-certified physicians — can be a convenient, affordable way to learn more about options, start fertility testing, and get timely answers to medical questions. But to drive meaningful impacts on care, comprehensive fertility care can't stop with virtual support. While there will continue to be an important place for virtual care in fertility journeys, especially related to education, today's employers are realizing that fertility benefit vendors that have more oversight over all steps along the way, including in-person care, will see the most significant improvements in member outcomes and experiences.

If you're curious to learn how Kindbody can support the needs of your employees, let's connect. We'd love to hear from you.



## Why Virtual-Only Care Hasn't Delivered

Kindbody's proprietary technology is centered on its HIPAA compliant electronic medical record (KindEMR) for increased standardization of care, offering online scheduling for virtual and in-person appointments and an intuitive patient portal.

The fertility landscape has evolved dramatically and continues to progress at an incredible speed. However, one area of fertility care has not kept pace—electronic medical records. Kindbody is the only fertility clinic network in the U.S. that owns and operates proprietary technology like its patient portal and KindEMR.

Kindbody's KindEMR supports the full spectrum of reproductive health and family-building care including both female and male fertility, fertility preservation, genetic testing, in vitro fertilization (IVF), donor and surrogacy services, and adoption. Additionally, the KindEMR has the capability to integrate support that is critical to successful fertility and family-building journeys such as nutrition and mental health support. Kindbody has built in workflows into its KindEMR that are designed to support all paths to parenthood and personalized care plans for every fertility journey regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. As the care provider, Kindbody gives patients the ability to securely message their doctor, chat with their embryologist, and access real time insights into assessments and blood test results any time of the day or night. Finally, the entire patient journey from consultation to postpartum care, mental health to nutrition support, and billing and benefit information, lives in one place connecting the dots across the fertility care continuum.

Additionally, Kindbody has invested millions to improve artificial intelligence (AI) in fertility treatment. The company is working on several AI products including: a more personalized, standardized decision making tool allowing for more efficiency for the provider; an improved prognosis tool so the patient knows what to expect and predicts their likelihood of success; and AI in the lab to better predict which embryo is best to transfer and which egg is best to fertilize. AI revolves around data and, the more data, the better the AI. Kindbody is the clinical care provider and serves thousands of patients, which allows the company to develop and scale its AI solution and then use it to improve efficiency and improve health outcomes.