



Messaging Your Care Team Through the Portal — What to Send and When

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1757 —————

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

If you read one page first, make it this one. The messages feature in your patient portal is a secure, private way to send a written note to your doctor's office — a refill request, a quick follow-up question, a bit of clarification after a visit. It is not email, it is not texting, and it is not for anything that can't wait.

- Look for a button called Messages, Message My Care Team, or Ask a Question — labels vary by system.
- A nurse or staff member usually reads it first, not your doctor directly, and replies in about one to a few business days.
- Keep each message to one topic and one clear question so it's easy to answer.
- For anything urgent, call the office. For an emergency, call 911 — never a portal message.

WATCH OUT

This is information about using the technology, not medical advice. I can help you find the button, write a clear note, and attach a photo. What your symptoms or results mean, and what to do about them, is for your doctor or nurse. If something feels truly wrong, don't type a message and wait — call the office, or 911 in an emergency.

THE BASICS

1. What Portal Messaging Actually Is

A secure note to the office, not a text message.

Your patient portal is the website or app your doctor's office uses to share your records, test results, and appointments. Tucked inside it is a messages feature — a way to send a written note straight to your care team through a private, locked channel, instead of regular email that anyone might intercept.

Think of it less like texting a friend and more like dropping a note in a basket at the front desk. Someone picks it up during office hours, reads it, and gets back to you. It's convenient and it's on the record, which is exactly why it's good for some things and wrong for others.

GOOD TO KNOW

The word "secure" here means the message stays inside the medical system, protected by the same privacy rules as the rest of your chart. That's why you have to log in to read a reply — it won't show up in your regular email inbox.

WHERE IT LIVES

2. Finding the Messages Inbox

The button hides under a few different names.

The first hurdle is just finding it. Once you're logged into your portal, look on the main screen or the menu for a button with an envelope icon or a word like Messages. Different health systems name it differently, so don't expect the exact same wording your neighbor has.

- Common labels: Messages, Messaging, Message My Care Team, Ask a Question, or Contact Us.
- On a phone app, it's often along the bottom row or behind a menu button in a corner.
- To start a new one, look for a button marked New Message, Send a Message, or a pencil or plus icon.
- Replies to you usually land in the same place, sometimes under an Inbox tab.

TIP

If you truly can't find it, your provider's MyChart or portal help page spells out where the button is for your system, and the office front desk can point you to it. Labels vary, so this is a fair thing to ask about — or to call me and we'll find it together.

WHO READS IT

3. Who's Actually on the Other End

Usually a nurse or staff member first — not your doctor.

It's natural to picture your message landing on your doctor's desk. More often, it lands in a shared pool that a nurse, a medical assistant, or front-desk staff watch during the workday. They read it, and many questions they can answer or handle right there.

When something needs the doctor, the staff member passes it along and the doctor answers through them or directly. This is a good thing — it means a trained person sees your note quickly, rather than it waiting until your doctor has a free moment between patients.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because a team shares the inbox, it helps to write as if a capable stranger will read it first. Don't assume they already know your whole story from yesterday's visit — a sentence of context saves everyone a step.

GOOD USES

4. What the Portal Is Great For

Non-urgent things that can wait a few days.

The portal shines for the small, non-urgent errands that used to mean a phone call and a wait on hold. If your question can comfortably wait a few days for an answer, it's usually a good fit for a message.

- Asking for a prescription refill on a medicine you take regularly.
- A follow-up question about something your doctor said at a recent visit.
- Clarifying instructions — how to take a new medicine, when to resume an activity.
- A general, non-urgent health question for your own care.
- Asking about a form, a referral, or paperwork you need.
- Letting the office know about a change, like a new pharmacy or phone number.

Notice the thread running through all of these: none of them is an emergency, and none needs an answer in the next hour. That's the sweet spot.

NOT FOR THIS

5. What Not to Send Through the Portal

Some things need a faster, different door.

Just as important as knowing what to send is knowing what to keep off the portal. Anything urgent, time-sensitive, or complicated is better handled another way, because a message may sit unread until the next business day.

- Emergencies of any kind — those are 911, every time.
- Anything time-sensitive, where waiting a day or two could matter.
- New or worsening symptoms that worry you — call the office so they can decide how fast you need to be seen.
- A long, tangled story with many questions at once — that's a phone call or a visit.
- A question about someone else's care; messages are tied to your own record.

WATCH OUT

A portal message is not watched every minute. No one is guaranteed to see it the instant you send it — not at night, not on weekends, not on holidays. If it can't wait for business hours, it does not belong in a message.

THE FIRM LINE

6. Urgent Means Call, Emergency Means 911

The one rule to never bend.

I'll say this plainly because it's the heart of the whole guide. A portal message is for things that can wait. The moment something can't wait, you leave the portal and pick up the phone — the office for urgent concerns, and 911 for a true emergency.

Chest pain, sudden weakness or drooping on one side, trouble speaking, severe trouble breathing, a bad fall — these are 911 situations, not messages. The people who could help you fastest will never see a portal note in time, and every minute you spend typing is a minute lost.

WATCH OUT

Never talk yourself into "I'll just send a message and see what they say." If you're asking whether it's an emergency, treat it like one. Call 911. It is always better to be told you were careful than to have waited.

TIMING

7. How Long a Reply Really Takes

Days, not minutes — and that's normal.

The most common frustration with portal messages is expecting a quick reply. Care teams read these between seeing patients, so an answer typically takes about one to a few business days. Some offices aim for two or three; others ask you to allow up to five. All of that is normal.

- Business days means Monday through Friday — a Friday-night message may not be read until Monday.
- Nights, weekends, and holidays usually don't count toward the reply window.
- Your office may post its own expected response time; it's worth knowing what yours is.
- If a reply would change what you do today, that's a sign to call instead of message.

GOOD TO KNOW

Setting your expectations right up front saves a lot of worry. If you send a note Saturday morning and hear nothing by Saturday night, nothing is wrong — the office simply isn't reading messages until the week starts.

ONE TOPIC

8. Keep Each Message to a Single Subject

One question per message is the kind thing to do.

It's tempting to save up and fire off everything at once — a refill, a question about your knee, and a note about your upcoming trip, all in one message. Resist that. A message crammed with several topics is hard to route and easy to half-answer, because different people may handle different parts.

- Send a separate message for each distinct question or request.
- The refill goes to the staff who handle refills; the knee question goes to a nurse — one topic keeps each on track.
- A focused message is quicker to answer, so you often hear back sooner, not slower.

TIP

If you catch yourself writing the word "also," that's usually your cue to stop and start a second message instead. One topic, one message — your care team will thank you for it.

WRITE IT WELL

9. A Message a Nurse Can Act On

Short, clear, and specific beats long every time.

A good portal message is short and specific. The person reading it wants to know who you are, what you need, and enough detail to act — no more. You don't need medical words or formal language; plain sentences are perfect.

- 1 Start with the point: "I'd like a refill of my blood pressure pill," or "I have a question about my knee."
- 2 Add the key facts: which medicine and pharmacy, or how long something's been going on.
- 3 Ask one clear question at the end so they know exactly what you need.
- 4 Re-read it once. If a stranger could act on it without calling you back, it's ready.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many portals limit how long a message can be, so trimming it down isn't just polite — it's sometimes required. If you find you need pages to explain, that's a sign the matter wants a phone call or a visit.

THE SUBJECT

10. Picking the Right Category or Subject

A good label gets your note to the right desk.

When you start a new message, many portals ask you to pick a subject or a category from a list — things like "Prescription question," "Medical question," "Scheduling," or "Billing." This isn't busywork; it's how your note gets steered to the right team.

- Pick the category that best matches your question; a refill goes under prescriptions, not billing.
- If you're not sure, choose the closest fit — staff can reroute it.
- Some systems also ask which doctor or office the message is for; pick the one you're actually asking about.
- A clear subject line, if it lets you type one, helps too: "Refill - lisinopril" beats "Question."

WATCH OUT

If the category list confuses you, don't let it stop you. Pick the nearest option and explain in the message itself. A real person reads it and will send it where it needs to go.

REFILLS

11. Asking for a Prescription Refill

One of the portal's best, easiest uses.

Refills are a classic portal win. Instead of calling the pharmacy, then the office, then waiting, you send one note and the office sends the prescription where it needs to go. Some portals even have a dedicated Refill or Medications button that's tidier than a free-text message.

- Say exactly which medicine, and the dose if you know it.
- Name your pharmacy and its location so it goes to the right one.
- Mention if you're nearly out, so they know it's not a lazy-week request.
- Allow a few business days — don't send it the morning you take your last pill.

WATCH OUT

If you've completely run out of a medicine you can't safely skip, don't rely on a message sitting in a queue. Call the office, and call your pharmacy — some pharmacies can provide a short emergency supply while the refill is sorted out.

FOLLOW-UP

12. Clarifying After a Visit

The question you thought of on the drive home.

We've all walked out of an appointment and thought of the question we meant to ask. The portal is made for exactly this — a quick follow-up to pin down something the doctor said, without booking a whole new visit.

- Remind them which visit: "At my checkup on Tuesday, you mentioned..."
- Ask the one thing you're unsure of: "Should I take the new pill with food?"
- Keep it to clarifying what was already discussed, not opening a brand-new problem.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your follow-up turns out to be a whole new concern — a new symptom, a new worry — that's really a new visit or a phone call, not a message. Clarifying is a message; a new problem usually isn't.

RESULTS

13. Questions About a Test Result

When a number shows up before the doctor calls.

These days your test results often post to the portal the moment the lab finishes them — sometimes before your doctor has had a chance to look. So it's common to see a result, maybe one flagged outside the normal range, and have questions. A portal message is a reasonable way to ask.

- Point to the specific result: "My cholesterol panel from Monday shows a flagged number."
- Ask your actual question: "Does this change anything, or should I just wait for our visit?"
- Give the office a few days; interpreting results isn't a same-minute job.

WATCH OUT

Seeing a flagged number before anyone explains it is unsettling, but a single value outside a range is often nothing alarming — ranges vary by lab. I can't tell you what your result means; that's for your clinician. If you feel truly unwell, call, don't wait on a message.

PHOTOS

14. Attaching a Photo the Right Way

A picture can save a trip — when it's a clear one.

Many portals let you attach a photo to a message — a rash, a healing incision, a swollen ankle. A good picture can help a nurse judge whether you need to be seen. Look for a paperclip, a camera icon, or an "Add attachment" button when you're writing the message.

- Take the photo in good, even light — daylight near a window is best.
- Get close enough to see detail, but hold still so it's not blurry.
- Include something for scale if size matters, like a fingertip near a spot.
- Say in the message what the photo shows and what's changed since last time.

TIP

Snap the photo first in your phone's camera, then attach it — that's usually easier than fumbling with the camera inside the portal app. If attaching stumps you, this is a perfect thing for us to do together once so you've got the hang of it.

THE COST

15. When a Message Might Be Billed

Some lengthy medical-advice messages can carry a charge.

Here's one that surprises people: a small number of health systems have started billing for certain messages — the ones that require real medical decision-making and take a provider more than a few minutes to answer, the kind of thing that would otherwise have been a visit. Most everyday messages are not billed.

- Quick things — refills, scheduling, a simple clarification — generally aren't charged.
- A long question that needs the doctor to weigh in and make a judgment is the kind that might be.
- Where there is a charge, it often works like a visit co-pay, and some plans or programs cover it fully.
- Policies vary widely from one system to the next, and many don't bill at all.

GOOD TO KNOW

I can't tell you what your particular office or plan does — that genuinely varies. If you're concerned about a possible charge, just ask your office: "Do you ever bill for portal messages, and what kind?" They've heard the question and can tell you plainly.

SENT, NOW WHAT

16. What Happens After You Send

Where your message goes and how the reply comes back.

Once you hit send, your message drops into the office's secure inbox. A staff member reads it during business hours, handles it or routes it, and the answer comes back as a new message in your portal. You'll often get a plain email or text nudge saying "You have a new message" — but never the medical details themselves in regular email.

- Your sent message usually stays visible in a Sent folder so you can see what you asked.
- The reply shows up back in your portal inbox; you log in to read it.
- A notification may ping your email or phone to tell you to go look.
- The whole back-and-forth becomes part of your record, which is handy later.

GOOD TO KNOW

That nudge email that says "new message, log in to view" is normal and safe. A legitimate one never asks you to type your password into the email itself — you always go to the portal and log in there.

NO REPLY

17. If You Don't Hear Back

A calm next step when the window passes.

Now and then a message slips through the cracks, or lands right before a holiday. If the usual reply window has passed and you've heard nothing, don't stew — there's a simple next move.

- 1 Check your portal inbox and your Sent folder to be sure it actually went.
- 2 Look for a reply you may have missed, including any spam folder for the nudge email.
- 3 If it's been longer than the office's stated window, call the front desk and mention you sent a message.
- 4 If the matter has become urgent while you waited, stop waiting and call.

GOOD TO KNOW

A missing reply is almost always a busy office or a technical hiccup, not anyone ignoring you. A friendly phone call sorts it out faster than sending the same message three more times.

PHONE VS PORTAL

18. When to Just Pick Up the Phone

The portal is one tool, not the only one.

The portal is wonderful, but it hasn't replaced the telephone, and it shouldn't. Some things are simply faster, clearer, or safer with a real voice on the line. Knowing when to call is part of using the portal well.

- Call when you need an answer today or within a day.
- Call when the matter is complicated and would take you ten sentences to type.
- Call when you're worried and want the reassurance of talking to a person.
- Call for anything urgent — and 911 for anything that feels like an emergency.

TIP

There's no prize for doing everything through the portal. If typing it out feels harder than just calling, that's your answer — pick up the phone.

NOTIFICATIONS

19. Turning On Alerts So You See the Reply

So an answer doesn't sit unread for a week.

A reply does you no good if you never notice it arrived. Most portals can send you a little heads-up — an email or a text — whenever there's a new message waiting. Turning that on is one of the best setup steps you can take.

- Look in the portal's Settings or Preferences for Notifications or Communication Preferences.
- Choose email, text, or both — whichever you actually check.
- Make sure the email address and phone number on file are current.
- Test it by sending a simple message and seeing whether the nudge arrives.

GOOD TO KNOW

The notification is just a doorbell, not the message itself. For privacy, it tells you to log in and look — it won't put your health details in a regular email or text. That's by design.

FOR THE HELPER

20. Messaging on Behalf of a Parent

Doing it right through proxy access.

If you help a parent or spouse with their care, you may want to send messages for them. The right way is proxy access — your own login tied to their record, set up with their permission — not quietly using their account. Proxy access keeps it clear who's writing.

- With proxy access, the office sees that you, the helper, sent the note on their behalf.
- Mention your role in the message: "I'm writing for my mother, Jane Smith."
- Remember messages are tied to one person's record — send about that person's care only.
- There's a companion guide in this series on getting proxy access to a parent's portal; ask me for it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Sharing one login may seem simpler, but proxy access is cleaner and safer, and it means the care team always knows who they're really talking to. It's worth the one-time setup.

REPLY OR NEW

21. Replying Versus Starting Fresh

Keep a conversation together, start a new one for a new topic.

When a reply comes back, you'll usually see a Reply button right on it. Using Reply keeps the whole back-and-forth together as one thread, which is handy — the staff member can see what was already said without hunting for it. For a brand-new topic, though, start a fresh message instead.

- Reply when you're continuing the same conversation — clarifying their answer or saying thanks.
- Start a new message when it's a different subject, so it gets routed to the right team.
- Don't reply to an old refill thread to ask about your knee; that's a new message.
- A thread keeps the history in one place, which makes the next answer quicker.

TIP

A good rule of thumb: if your new note is about the same thing, reply; if it's about something else, start fresh. It's the same one-topic idea, just applied to replies.

SCHEDULING

22. Appointments Through the Portal

Often a button of its own, separate from messages.

Booking, changing, or asking about an appointment is a common reason people message, but many portals have a dedicated Appointments or Scheduling button that's faster than a free-text note. It's worth a look before you type — you may be able to grab a slot yourself in a few taps.

- Look for Appointments, Schedule, or Visits on the main menu first.
- Some portals let you book certain visit types directly; others only show what's already scheduled.
- If there's no self-scheduling, a message asking to be booked works — say what the visit is for and your general availability.
- To cancel or move one, do it as early as you can so the slot can go to someone else.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you need to be seen soon and the portal only offers dates weeks out, don't just message and wait. Call the office and say so — they often hold slots or can fit urgent needs that the online calendar doesn't show.

MISTAKES

23. Common Mistakes People Make

The slip-ups I see most often.

None of these are disasters, but knowing them ahead of time saves you a little grief and gets you a faster, clearer answer.

- Sending an urgent concern by message and then waiting anxiously for a reply that's days off.
- Piling five questions into one message so only some get answered.
- Writing a wall of text with the real question buried in the middle.
- Forgetting to say which pharmacy or which medicine on a refill request.
- Not turning on notifications, then missing the reply for a week.

- Expecting a weekend or holiday answer.

WATCH OUT

If you avoid just two of these — keep it to one topic, and don't use it for urgent things — you'll be using the portal better than most people already.

QUESTIONS

24. Common Worries, Answered

The things people actually ask me.

"Will my doctor personally read it?" Maybe, but usually a nurse or staff member reads it first and brings the doctor in only when needed. That's faster for you, not a brush-off.

"Is it really private?" Yes — it stays inside the medical system's secure portal, under the same privacy rules as your chart. That's why you log in to read replies.

"What if I send it to the wrong place?" Not a problem. A real person reads it and reroutes it. You won't break anything by picking the wrong category.

"Can I take it back?" Usually not once it's sent, so give it a quick re-read first. If you sent something in error, just send a short follow-up saying so.

MYTHS

25. A Few Myths, Cleared Up

What portal messaging is — and isn't.

"It's basically texting my doctor." No. It's a note to the whole office that's read during business hours, not a live chat with your doctor's phone.

"Someone's watching it all the time." They're not. It's checked during the workday, which is exactly why emergencies go to 911.

"Every message gets a bill now." No. Only a small slice of long, advice-heavy messages at some systems, and many systems don't bill at all. Ask your office.

"It replaces calling or visiting." It adds a convenient option for non-urgent things. The phone and the exam room are still there when you need them.

A DAY

26. A Message From Start to Finish

What this looks like on an ordinary week.

Strip away the worry and here's the real rhythm of it. Tuesday morning you notice you're down to a few blood pressure pills. You log into the portal, tap Messages, start a new one, pick "Prescription," and type three sentences: which pill, which pharmacy, nearly out. You hit send and go about your day.

Wednesday afternoon your phone buzzes with a "new message" nudge. You log in, and there's a reply: the refill has been sent to your pharmacy and will be ready tomorrow. Two minutes of your time, no hold music, no missed calls. That's the portal at its best — small, non-urgent, handled cleanly.

GOOD TO KNOW

The jobs the portal does well are the quiet, ordinary ones. It's not meant to carry the big, scary, or fast-moving moments — those have their own doors, and you know them now.

TEMPLATES

27. Simple Messages You Can Copy

Starting points you can make your own.

If a blank message box makes you freeze, here are a few plain templates. Change the details to fit, and you're done. Notice how short they are — that's the point.

- Refill: "I'd like a refill of my lisinopril. My pharmacy is the one on Main Street. I have about three pills left."
- Follow-up: "At my visit Tuesday you started me on a new water pill. Should I take it in the morning or at night?"
- Result: "My lab results from Monday show a flagged number on the cholesterol panel. Should I do anything, or wait for our visit?"
- Form: "I need a form signed for my pharmacy. What's the best way to get that to you?"

TIP

Save a couple of these as notes on your phone or a card by the computer. The hardest part of a portal message is starting it, and a template takes that away.

ETIQUETTE

28. Being Clear and Kind

A little courtesy gets a better answer.

The people reading your message want to help, and they're reading a lot of them. A clear, friendly note is easier to act on and simply nicer to receive. None of this is about being formal — it's about being easy to help.

- Lead with what you need; save the backstory or trim it.
- Give the facts they'd have to ask for anyway — dates, medicine names, pharmacy.
- One topic, one question, so nothing gets missed.
- A "thank you" costs nothing and is always welcome.

GOOD TO KNOW

Clarity is the real courtesy here. A message a nurse can answer in one read, without calling you back for details, respects everyone's time — including yours, because you get your answer sooner.

EXPECTATIONS

29. What the Portal Can and Can't Do

Right-sizing what you lean on it for.

Used for the right things, the portal is a genuine time-saver and a lovely convenience. The trouble only comes when people ask it to do jobs it was never built for — carry urgent news, deliver instant answers, or replace a real conversation.

- It CAN: handle refills, clarify instructions, ask non-urgent questions, share a photo, keep a written record.
- It CAN'T: get help in an emergency, guarantee a fast reply, or handle a complex, evolving problem.
- It's one tool on your belt, alongside the phone, the visit, and 911.

GOOD TO KNOW

Match the tool to the task and the portal will never let you down. Ask it to do the phone's job or 911's job, and it will — because it can't do those jobs at all.

SECURITY

30. Keeping Your Account Safe

The messages are private only if your login is.

Everything in your portal, messages included, is protected — but only as well as your login is. A few simple habits keep your private conversations private, without turning you into a security expert.

- Use a strong, unique password you don't use for other sites.
- Turn on two-step verification if your portal offers it — a code to your phone when you log in.
- Log out on a shared or public computer.
- Never type your portal password into a link from an email; go to the portal yourself and log in there.

WATCH OUT

If an email or text about a "new message" asks you to click a link and enter your password, be suspicious. Real notifications send you to log in at the portal the normal way. When in doubt, don't click — open the portal yourself, or call me.

ON THE APP

31. Messaging From the Phone App

The same inbox, in your pocket.

Most portals have a phone app as well as a website, and the messages feature works the same in both. The app can be handier for a quick note or a photo, since the camera's right there. If you're comfortable with your phone, the app is often the easier door.

- The messages button is usually on the app's home screen or bottom row.
- Attaching a photo is often a tap or two easier from the app.
- Turn on the app's notifications so a reply pings your phone.
- Whatever you send on the app shows up on the website too — it's all one inbox.

TIP

If the app feels cramped, there's no shame in using the website on a computer with a bigger screen and a real keyboard. Same messages, same inbox — use whichever is comfortable for you.

AFTER HOURS

32. Sending at Night or on a Weekend

It's fine to send — just know when it's read.

You can write and send a portal message any time, day or night. The catch is nobody reads it until the office is open again. So a Saturday message is perfectly fine for something that can wait until Monday — and perfectly wrong for something that can't.

- Send non-urgent notes whenever it's convenient; they'll be there Monday morning.
- Don't expect a nights-or-weekends reply unless your office specifically says it watches then.
- For an after-hours concern that can't wait, call the office — many have an on-call line or recorded instructions.
- For an emergency after hours, it's still 911, same as any other time.

WATCH OUT

The quiet danger of after-hours messaging is feeling like you've "done something" about a worry when really it's just sitting unread until morning. If it's keeping you up with concern, that's a call, not a message.

RECORDS

33. Saving the Replies That Matter

Your messages are a quiet little record.

One underrated perk: your portal messages stick around, so you've got a written record of what you asked and what you were told. That beats trying to remember a phone call weeks later, and it's genuinely useful when something comes up again.

- Messages usually stay in your inbox and Sent folder unless you delete them.
- For an important instruction, you can often print the message or save it as a PDF.
- Jot the gist in your own notebook too, if paper is easier for you to find.
- If you ever change systems, ask how to get a copy of your records, messages included.

GOOD TO KNOW

Having the exact wording of an instruction — "take it at night," "stop three days before the procedure" — is wonderfully reassuring. You're not relying on memory; it's right there to re-read.

SAFETY

34. When to Call the Doctor — or 911

The portal is a convenience, not a lifeline.

I'll close the how-to with the thing that matters most. The messages feature is for the calm, non-urgent corners of your care. It is not an emergency line and never will be. When something is wrong and can't wait, you reach for the phone, not the keyboard.

WATCH OUT

For chest pain, trouble breathing, signs of a stroke, a serious fall, or any sense that something is very wrong, call 911 — do not send a portal message and wait. For urgent-but-not-emergency concerns, call your office. The portal is for everything that can comfortably wait.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

35. You Don't Have to Do This Alone

A friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made portal messaging feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything. Nobody expects you to.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for less. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee.

I'm a patient tech helper — not a doctor, nurse, or your insurance company — so I stick to the technology: the apps, the logins, the cameras, the gadgets and getting them talking to each other. Anything about your health, your medicines, or what a number means, I'll always point you back to your doctor or nurse.

GOOD TO KNOW

When you call, I answer — or Sophie, my friendly AI helper, takes a message so nothing gets lost. Sophie isn't a runaround; she's just making sure I call you back.

TIP

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County, with 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help. If you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by your computer or phone.

- Find it under Messages, Message My Care Team, or Ask a Question — labels vary.
- Good for: refills, follow-up questions, clarifying instructions, a non-urgent question, a photo.
- Not for: emergencies, anything time-sensitive, new worrying symptoms, or someone else's care.
- Expect a reply in about one to a few business days — not nights, weekends, or holidays.
- One topic per message; lead with what you need; keep it short and specific.
- Some systems bill for long medical-advice messages — ask your office if you're unsure.
- Urgent? Call the office. Emergency? Call 911 — never a portal message.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

What Happens After You Hit Send

A portal message isn't a text — here's the real path it takes.

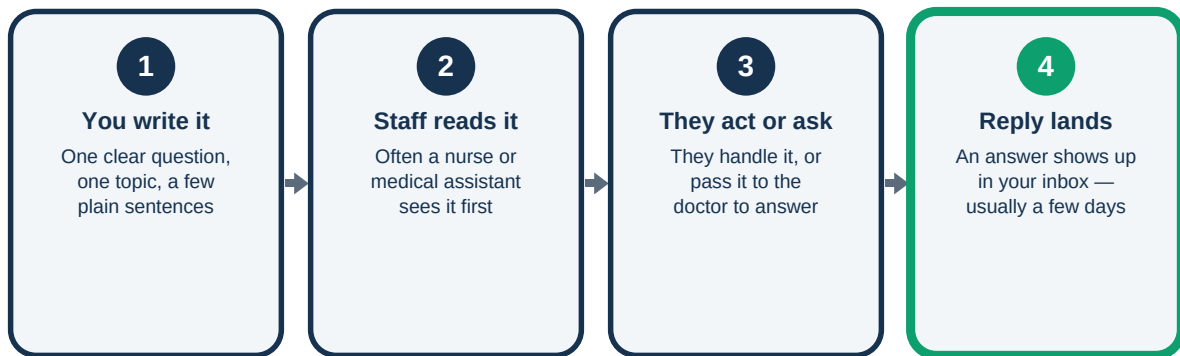


Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Message, Call, or 911?

The same question, three doors. Pick by how fast you need an answer.

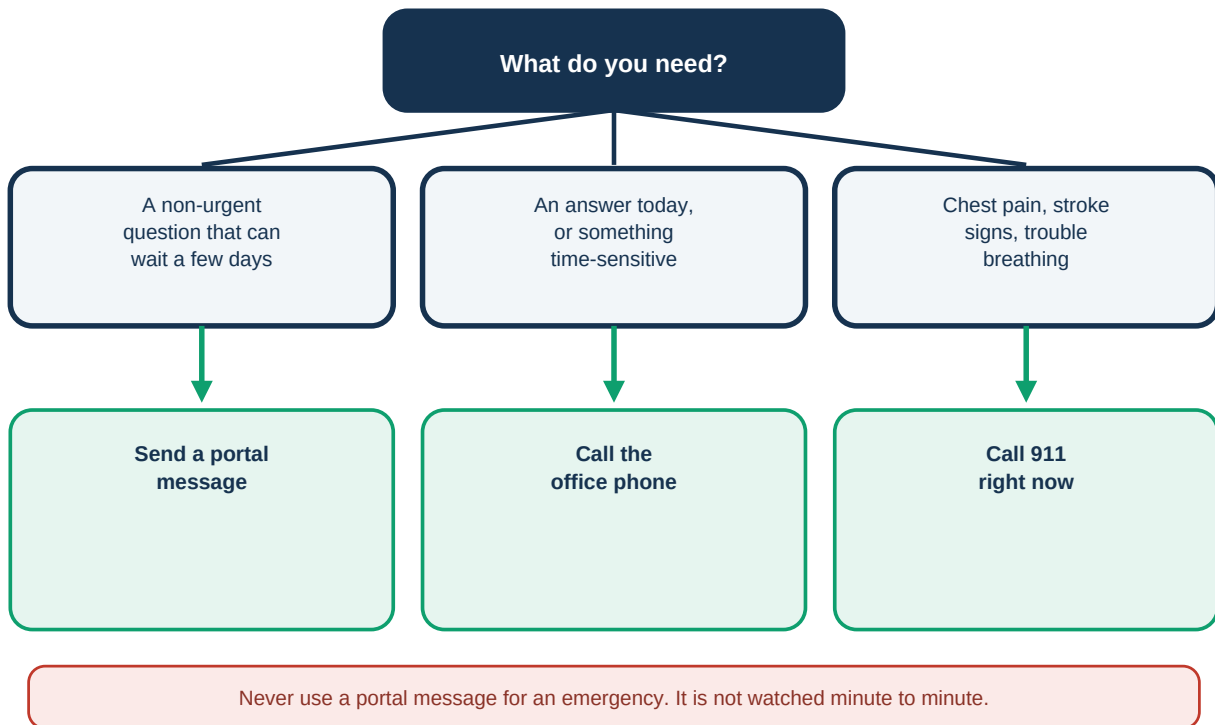


Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.