

# Telehealth information for patients and carers



Instead of a face-to-face appointment, your treating team may be offering phone or video consultations. These are both types of telehealth, allowing you to continue safely accessing healthcare remotely.

## What are the benefits?

Telehealth provides a safe way for you to meet from the comfort of your home, while also:

- ✓ enabling you to continue managing your health care, even when restricted by travel or illness
- ✓ reducing your risk of getting other illnesses like colds or flu, especially important if your immune system (your body's ability to fight infection) is currently weakened
- ✓ avoiding the need to travel to appointments- saving you time and money on travel, parking and accommodation
- ✓ allowing your time spent in the waiting room to be from the comfort of your own home

## What appointments are best for telehealth?

Various health professionals can provide telehealth consultations for most types of appointments including:

- ✓ screening, diagnosis, treatment planning and follow up care
- ✓ management and advice for symptoms and side effects
- ✓ referrals for scans, tests or to other medical professionals
- ✓ discussing scan and test results
- ✓ repeat prescriptions
- ✓ mental wellbeing or counselling

## What do I need?

### Video calls:

- a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or computer with a camera, microphone and speakers. If preferred, you may also use a headset
- an email address or mobile phone number so they can email or text you the instructions and link
- an internet connection

### Phone calls:

- a mobile phone or landline

If you are unsure which type of telehealth appointment you are booked for, contact your health service to confirm. .

## Before your telehealth appointment:

### Let your health service know if you:

- are hard of hearing
- need an interpreter

### Make sure you:

- read any further instructions sent to you
- attempt a 'test call' if available on the health service website, ensuring your camera and microphone are turned on (off mute)
- have a list of questions prepared
- have the email address for your local pharmacy in case your doctor needs to request a prescription

### Setting up:

- find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted, avoiding windows or bright lights behind you
- ensure your mobile is not on silent, in case your health service tries to call you
- if using a smartphone or tablet, rest your screen on something to free your hands for writing notes. A pile of books works well
- set up the screen so you have your face and shoulders in view
- connect a few minutes before your appointment time so you can check everything is working
- similar to face-to-face appointments, you may be required to wait as they can often run behind schedule

## During the appointment:

- look at the screen
- speak slowly and clearly, taking in turns and not speaking over each other
- if you get cut off, wait for a return phone call from your health professional
- write down any instructions and what you need to do next
- ensure you have asked all your questions
- ask who to contact if you remember any questions after the call ends
- if you would like to see your test or scan results, ask your health professional if they can share their screen with you

## Can I request a face-to-face appointment?

### Yes. You should have a face-to-face appointment if:

- your health professional has asked to see you in person. They will tell you how to stay safe when visiting
- you need a physical examination, test, treatment, or scan

### You should discuss your options with your health service if you:

- don't feel comfortable using telehealth
- don't have the technology or cannot use it
- have more than one appointment at the health centre or hospital

## How much will it cost?

The video call will use an internet connection and data, so it is recommended you connect to WiFi if available to reduce your mobile data allowance.

The same costs of a face-to-face medical consultation (if any) will still apply.

## Can I have a support person with me for the appointment?

Yes. Just make sure you introduce the person at the start of the consult, as you would if you were meeting in person.