

Preparing For Your Video Consult

What is telehealth?

Telehealth, or virtual healthcare, provides a way of having an appointment with your doctor, nurse, psychologist or other healthcare provider without being in the same place. It's sometimes called an e-consultation.

This is a new way of seeing your healthcare team. Your first consultation may seem strange for both you and your healthcare provider, and that's normal. As we do this more often, everyone will start to feel more comfortable.

Telehealth involves having a video call where you can see a healthcare provider, such as your doctor, specialist or nurse, and talk about your condition via a video link rather than in a face-to-face appointment in the same room.

Some of the benefits include:

- removing the risk of catching or spreading germs
- reducing time and costs involved with traveling to an appointment
- not having to leave your house when you are feeling unwell.

What can I expect from a telehealth consult?

Here are some commonly asked questions about what you can expect:

Do I need to pay?

If the consultation is through a private healthcare facility, such as your doctor, specialist or nurse, you will be asked to pay for the healthcare professional's time. This will differ by health professional but expect to be asked to pay an ordinary consultation fee for a video consult.

Will my information be secure and safe?

Yes, your healthcare professional will keep your information secure and safe, and will treat the information you share with them in the same way as they normally would if you were to see them in person.

What if I need a physical examination?

As your healthcare professional will not be able to examine you, sometimes you may be asked to examine yourself. For example, you may be asked to feel your tummy for where it is sore. Sometimes it can help to have someone else you are comfortable with do this for you. This could be a family member, a friend or another healthcare professional.

Your healthcare professional may decide they need to examine you personally. If so, your practice will arrange a face-to-face appointment at a new time.

What if I need my blood pressure, heart rate and temperature measured?

If you have your own equipment, you may be asked to take your own blood pressure, heart rate and temperature. Taking your own pulse can be quite easy. You can find it in your neck or in your wrist close to the base of your thumb and time it over one minute.

How should I prepare for my telehealth consult?

1. If you are having a scheduled appointment you are likely to be sent a link by email (sometimes by text). You will need to click on this link. Take care that the link is the one you were expecting from your healthcare professional.
2. Make sure you are in a comfortable and private place.
3. It's best to have a hands-free device. If you have a smart phone, find a way to prop it up so that you can move about.
4. Make sure that you have tested out your audio. You may need to have a set of earphones to hear well.
5. You may want to have a family/whānau member or friend with you. That's fine – just tell the healthcare professional when you join that they are there.
6. Write a list of what you want to talk about and have a pen and paper handy to write anything down if you need to.
7. Have all of your medicines with you, either in a list or in the packaging.
8. Make sure there is no one else streaming information from linked-in devices while you are having your consult, e.g. if someone is watching a video on the wi-fi network you are using, your video may be poor quality.