



carerhelp

Using telehealth



Social distancing and self-isolation means that it may be harder to manage your health care. Recent changes have meant that telehealth is now widely used across Australia to support the community during COVID-19.

Telehealth means that you can get in touch with your doctor or others in the health care team using a phone or computer rather than having to meet face to face for some or all of your healthcare consultations. This can reduce the risk of spreading infections.

A telehealth consultation can be done using a telephone or using video conferencing on your phone, tablet, or computer. A video

consultation means that you and your healthcare provider will be able to see and hear each other. If you have a telephone consultation you will only be able to hear each other.

Not all situations are suitable for telehealth and not all practitioners offer telehealth services.





Deciding about using telehealth

You can ring your GP or your service provider and ask them about telehealth services. They can explain why they think a telehealth consultation could be a suitable part of your care and answer any questions.

If you agree to participate, your health professional will book the consultation just like any other appointment. They will provide details on how access will occur.

As a carer you can participate in the consultation if the patient is happy for you to be there. There should be no additional cost other than the usual consultation fee.

Getting prepared for a video consultation

Just like you would get prepared to go and see your GP you should prepare for a telehealth consultation. Before the session find a quiet and well-lit spot and set up your computer, tablet, or phone. Check your internet connection. Ask others in your household to stop using internet applications that might slow your connection, such as videostreaming or gaming.

Have with you your relevant health notes, prescriptions, and any other medical or health documents you need. Prepare a list of things you need to ask or discuss and keep a pen and note pad nearby.



Sit close to the camera so your head and shoulders are in view. Make sure both of you are visible on the screen.



During a video consultation

Look directly at the screen. It can be helpful to talk a little more slowly than usual to help your healthcare provider hear you clearly. Give the other person time to answer.

If you get cut off, wait for the health provider to reconnect or to phone you.

Check that you have had your questions answered. Confirm any medication issues and how your prescriptions will be managed.

Make sure you have set up a time for any follow up meetings.

Telehealth services

While not all health care can be delivered online, there are an increasing number of helpful services. You may be eligible to receive other types of telehealth services to support your care including mental health supports.



Useful resources

The Centre for Online Health has developed a fact sheet on “What is telehealth and is it right for you?” This guide for consumers and patients is available [here](#).

The Centre for Online Health has also produced a guide to [Attending our video consultation](#).

The CarerHelp Question Prompt sheet has a [list of questions](#) based on common concerns that carers of people with advanced disease have. There is also a CarerHelp sheet on [managing communications](#). You can find both these sheets in the [CarerHelp Library](#).

There is a Department of Health factsheet on [electronic prescribing](#).

