

Attending your appointment using telehealth

This fact sheet is for people using telehealth to attend a medical appointment.

What is telehealth?

Telehealth is a way for healthcare providers, patients and carers to access and manage care virtually.

It uses technology (like computers and mobile phones, with high-speed internet) to connect people in different locations.

The appointment happens in a similar way as it would in person. There will be one or more healthcare providers taking part in the appointment. Sometimes you will be with a local healthcare provider, who will video conference another healthcare professional.

Why use telehealth?

Telehealth can make it easier and more convenient to attend appointments. This may mean:

- your travel and accommodation costs are reduced
- there is less disruption to your life (family, work, routine)
- you can bring together different people involved in your care
- you can access care during a time of disruption or crisis (such as the COVID-19 pandemic).

Your treating team will discuss options with you and identify the best approach based on your needs.

People often mix telehealth and face-to-face appointments. You can also choose to see your healthcare provider in person instead of having a telehealth appointment, depending on what is possible and what you prefer.

What happens before my appointment?

You will be given all the information you need before the appointment:

- the date and time
- where you need to go (if it is not at home)
- who will attend
- how the technology will be set up.

The healthcare provider who made the appointment may share information (such as your treatment history or wound pictures) with a local health provider. This helps them to better understand your condition.

All information shared is sent securely to ensure your privacy.

What happens during the appointment?

All healthcare providers who are part of the appointment will be introduced at the beginning of the appointment.

You can choose if a family member or support person attends as well.

Your appointment will run similar to a face-to-face appointment. If there is a healthcare provider with you in the room, he or she will set up the technology (such as a video camera, TV or computer, microphone). Everyone is able to see and hear each other.

If necessary, a portable camera can be used (for instance, to show a wound).

What if I have questions?

You can ask questions at any time before, during and after the appointment.

If you have specific concerns about the telehealth appointment, you should speak to your healthcare provider.. They will give staff members can give you more information, sort out any problems or set up a test call.

Telehealth etiquette for patients and carers

Set up a suitable space for your virtual appointment

A quiet space free of distractions is important. Be aware of loud noises and turn off the TV and other appliances that are noisy.

Lighting is also very important. Don't sit with your back to a window as the light can flood the camera and you won't be seen.

It is recommended that you use the self-view feature when you log into the platform. Take notice of what you can see and rearrange furniture if required.

Set up your device so it is stable and at eye level

You will have a better appointment if you don't have to hold your device. Set it up so it is at eye level and captures a close up view rather than a distant view of you.

Connectivity and technology

Have a stable internet connection is the most important requirement to ensure you have a quality connection with your healthcare provider. You can conduct a speed test.

NSW Health providers will provide you with a link to connect to them. You do not need to purchase any software to participate. You may need to purchase a webcam or a speaker if the device you are using does not have this built in.

It is recommended that you arrange for a test prior to the appointment.

Be punctual

If you have already tested your connection you will only need to connect 5 minutes prior to your appointment time.

If you are unable to attend your appointment please call the service to cancel and reschedule your appointment.

Confidentiality and maintaining your privacy

All appointments conducted via telehealth are private and secure. Telehealth appointments will not be recorded.

As with a face-to-face appointments, notes will be taken during the telehealth appointment by the healthcare providers, and entered into your medical record.