

Online Video Appointments

Patient Information Sheet

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Online video appointments can be a great alternative to face-to-face consultations. When you need a physical examination, a face-to-face consultation is the best option; however there may be situations where online video appointments can enable more convenient healthcare for you.

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners supports the use of telehealth and technology-based services where it assists GPs to provide safe, quality health care, improve health equity and increase service efficiency.

What is an online video appointment?

An online video appointment is a consultation between you and your GP located at another location, instead of you coming in to the practice to see them, using secure platforms to provide video consultations. Visual and audio information are exchanged in real time but the doctor and patient are not physically present in the same consultation room.

You will need a smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer that has a camera and microphone and is connected to the internet.

It is important to note that video appointments are not always appropriate, especially if you need any kind of physical examination (e.g. throat swab, blood pressure).

Advantages of online video appointments?

Everyone's situation is different but in general, the benefits of this service include:

- improve access to care
- reduce travel time & costs
- reduce time spent in the clinic's waiting room
- reduce absence from work
- complement face-to-face consultations
- possibilities for flexible after hours access

What could be appropriate to do as an online video appointment?

- When you don't require a physical examination
- Travel medicine conversations or advice when traveling
- Long term mental health reviews
- Long term condition review
- Palliative care reviews
- Work and Income benefit reviews
- Patients with physical access & mobility issues

We are unable to do ACC claims or renewals by online video appointments

How should I prepare for an online video appointment?

You can help get the best from an online video appointment by following these simple steps:

- Find a quiet and private location
- Log in at least 10 minutes early to ensure you are set up and ready to go
- avoid wearing brightly patterned or reflective clothing as this may not show up well on camera
- switch your mobile off or to silent mode

How private is the telehealth video consultation?

The same privacy and confidentiality requirements that apply to face-to-face consultations apply to online video consultations. It can only be seen and heard by the health care professionals involved.

What if I need to be examined?

If the video visit does not achieve everything that is needed, you will be given a choice about what to do next. This could include a follow up face-to-face visit, or a second video visit. Normal consultation fees will apply.

Physical examination is very limited over video, therefore if you require a physical examination we suggest you book a face-to-face appointment at the clinic.

Will the online video consultation be recorded?

No. Our practice does not record online video consultations and we do not give patients permission to make their own recordings of an online video consultation.

What if I feel I can't continue?

Most patients feel a little nervous at the beginning of their first online video consultation because it's a new way of seeing a doctor. However, most patients soon feel very comfortable with this kind of consultation. It's very unlikely you'll feel unable to continue with an online video consultation. If this does happen, you can change your mind and stop using video consultations at any time, including in the middle of a video visit. This will not make any difference to your right to ask for and receive health care.

Resources

- The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners summary statement on telehealth.
https://www.rnzcgp.org.nz/RNZCGP/Advocacy/Position_statements/Telehealth/RNZCGP/Advocacy/Position_statements/Telehealth.aspx?hkey=dbebc74e-ec5b-4741-9321-1488417204e3
- Handbook for the Telehealth online education module. Australian College of Rural & Remote Medicine.
<https://www.acrrm.org.au/docs/default-source/documents/rural-and-remote-medicine-resources/handbook-for-telehealth-online-education-module-final.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

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