

# Supported Telehealth

Information for consumers

## What is Telehealth?

Telehealth is the use of technology (usually video) to provide healthcare over a distance. Telehealth aims to make it easier for people who live in rural and remote areas, or who have difficulty accessing healthcare providers (e.g. GP, specialist or allied health practitioner), to have a consultation without having to travel long distances.

## Using Telehealth

Speak to your GP or healthcare professional about requesting a Telehealth consultation with your specialist. Remember that some health care cannot be provided at a distance; your specialist may decide that Telehealth consultation is not appropriate in some circumstances.

## Who can be part of the consultation?

Telehealth appointments can happen from your home, in a clinic or GP offices; and your GP or another healthcare professional can attend with you. If you have special needs, such as an interpreter, or would like a support person or family member to join the consultation, this can also be arranged.

At the start of the appointment everyone present will be introduced. As with a face-to-face appointment, there may be students, trainees or other staff in the appointment. You can always ask for them to leave at any time.

## Making an appointment

Your GP, healthcare professional or health service staff will assist with making and setting up the appointment, and providing facilities for you to use to access your Telehealth appointment.

Please make sure you let us know any special requirements and identify the people you would like to attend the appointment, so that the most suitable time can be arranged.

**IMPORTANT:** If you are unable to attend the appointment, please call us to cancel or reschedule as early as possible.

Don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions, or need help before, during or after your appointment.

## What will I need to do on the day?

Please have your phone turned on and available. We will call you if there are any problems with your appointment.

Prepare for the appointment as you would for a face-to-face appointment.

- Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the allocated appointment time.

As with other appointments, clinics often run behind time and you may have to wait before the specialist joins your appointment. Be ready anyway – you will see and hear when the appointment starts

A Telehealth consultation is like any other appointment. Try to:

- avoid any possible interruptions to your appointment,
- speak as clearly as possible, and
- look at the screen.

## **What about privacy?**

As with a face-to-face appointment:

- No one (including you, family or healthcare professionals) may record the consultation without written consent by all involved.
- Health professionals will keep a written record of the consultation and this will go in to your medical record.
- If you wish to speak privately with the healthcare provider, ask any other people present to leave the room.

## **What about follow up?**

You may be offered a follow-up appointment or investigations, as needed. Appointments could be by Telehealth again, or in person with your healthcare provider. If you require further tests or investigations, these will be arranged with you and appropriate providers.

## **What if I'm not happy with the consultation?**

If you don't like the style of Telehealth consultation you are always welcome to choose face-to-face consultations in future. You may also ask to stop the Telehealth consultation at any time. The choice is always yours.

As with any consultation, if you are not happy with the outcome or decisions, you can always ask to see another healthcare professional or seek a second opinion.

## **Are there any charges?**

Please speak to your specialist about any costs to you for a Telehealth consultation. If you ask your GP or another healthcare professional to attend the consultation with you, please discuss their potential fees with them. Both your medical specialist and your GP may bill Medicare. If eligible, you may be given Medicare billing consent forms to sign prior to your Telehealth consultation.

## **How can I give feedback?**

It is very important and useful to us and the future of Telehealth consultations that you share your experiences, and a survey may be provided for you to complete.

We are interested in any feedback about our service and encourage you to provide this, either verbally or in writing. Feedback will be managed in a confidential way.