

Virtual care Appointment Patient Reference Guide

Summary of steps

- Book Your Appointment
- Prepare for Your Appointment
- Check-In Online or Answer Phone Call
- Connect with a Doctor and Manage your Virtual Care appointment
- Follow up Required?

What is Virtual Care?

Virtual Care allows you to connect to a healthcare provider other than by an in-office appointment such as video or phone. You can use your smartphone or log onto your computer from the comfort of your home or office. Virtual Care services are covered under most provincial health plans (excluding dental).

Preparation for appointment

- 1. What is the purpose of this medical visit? What do I want to accomplish?**
- 2. How best can I achieve this purpose?**
 - By a phone call
 - By an internet meeting
 - By email
 - By text
 - By a video call
 - By an in-office appointment
- 3. If going into the office isn't necessary for an appointment, what documents do I need to have ready:**
 - Any test results or lab work (arrange to have this sent to the doctor's office in advance of the appointment)
 - A list of drugs and /or natural supplements I am taking
 - Provincial Health Card (i.e. OHIP) and cancer center card (if you have one)
 - My current weight
 - A list of the prescription numbers for these drugs and the pharmacies/hospitals that provide them including fax and phone numbers

- The names of all of my doctors and other healthcare providers and their contact information including phone and fax numbers, address
 - If you have a patient portal like MyChart have it open and accessible to confirm results
 - Leave enough time open before and after the appointed time of my call, at least 2 hours, in case the healthcare provider is early or late
 - Have the details for the call-in number or internet link readily available
 - Develop a list of questions you want to ask the doctor and requests you have for him e.g. renewal of prescriptions, referrals, treatment plan or update including need for another biomarker test
 - Have I arranged for anyone else I may need to be available for the call e.g. a translator, caregiver, family member, someone to ask questions or write notes for me if I cannot due to a disability or any other reason. If you wish to record the call, ask your healthcare provider at the beginning of the call if this is all right with them.
- 4. If you are unfamiliar with the technology and/or haven't used it for a while, practice or get a lesson.**

Managing the meeting for the best result

1. Accept blocked or unknown numbers. Both the doctor/ healthcare provider and administrative assistant may well be working offsite and will be calling from "private" numbers.
2. Ensure you have a reliable internet connection and functioning webcam and speakers for virtual online appointments.
3. Do not take your appointment from a place where you will be distracted, like while driving, or while in a coffee shop or other public place. Find a quiet, private space for the appointment and ensure it has space for you to make notes and to have anyone else you have invited to attend comfortably.
4. Have pen and paper ready and take notes. If you can, keep a separate diary for these notes.
5. Have the list of questions and requests for your appointment beside the device you will be using for the visit including any symptoms you have been keeping track of since your last visit and any patterns to them. Remember that reporting all the details of symptoms and concerns is not complaining but is helpful to the healthcare provider trying to assist you.
6. Have medication list/bottles and pharmacy information ready by the device you are using for the appointment.
7. Have glasses, hearing aids, walking aids or other aids you require nearby.

8. Remind anyone you have invited to join the meeting on that day about what time they are needed.
9. If you are placed on hold or asked to wait, please continue to stay either online or by the phone for your appointment.
10. Be sure to tell the doctor/ healthcare provider if you do not understand what he/she is saying, ask them to explain and spell medical terms so you can write them down; tell them if you cannot hear him/her, need him/her to speak more slowly or are having any other technical problems.
11. At the end of the call let the doctor/ healthcare provider know if you need him/her to follow up with anything in writing. Confirm agreed upon next steps by repeating back to the healthcare provider what you understand will happen next.
12. Let the doctor/ healthcare provider know if you feel that you need another virtual appointment and when.
13. Let the doctor/ healthcare provider know if you feel that you need an in-office appointment.
14. If a follow up appointment is required, ask how to schedule it.
15. If you are interested in learning about any support groups for your condition or patient organizations, ask your doctor/ healthcare provider if he/she knows about them and how to contact them.

Post-Meeting Follow up

1. Review the notes from the call.
2. Follow up on any items that need your attention e.g. (re)filling a prescription, making an appointment with another doctor/ healthcare provider.
3. Note the date of your next appointment in your calendar.
4. Keep a diary / notes of any new symptoms including your emotional sentiments and feelings before the next visit to share with your doctor/healthcare provider and whether there are any patterns to their appearance. If you feel they are too important to wait for the next appointment date, contact your doctor.
5. Take a picture of any physical symptoms such as redness, rash to show to your healthcare provider or to send to them.
6. Research by internet or other means patient support groups and/or patient organizations for your condition if you are interested in talking to other patients or getting patient group information