

# **TELEMEDICINE:** **Information for workers**

*Adapted from RACGP, 2017*

## **What is a telehealth video consultation?**

A telehealth video consultation is a consultation between a patient at one location and the doctor located at another location.

## **Advantages of telehealth video consultations**

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

- improved access to specialist medical care
- reduced waiting time
- reduced risk of contagion or travel accident
- reduced travel time and costs
- reduced absence from work

## **Do I have to participate?**

No. Depending on the circumstances, you may be able to attend a face-to-face consultation specialist if you prefer. A telehealth video consultation will only happen if the doctor considers it safe and suitable and you are happy to participate in a telehealth video consultation.

## **Where are they provided?**

You can participate in a telehealth video consultation from anywhere that is sufficiently quiet and private. Is ideal if you are seated in an area with a plain wall, for example, behind you rather than in an open space with people passing, other distractions as back drop.

## **What if I need to cancel my appointment?**

If you need to cancel, please let us know immediately, because rescheduling telehealth video consultations is more complicated than rescheduling a face-to-face appointment.

## **How should I prepare?**

You can help get the best from a telehealth video consultation by following these simple steps:

- try to ensure punctuality, be available at the time scheduled
- Make sure that only people that you are comfortable with having present during the consultation are within earshot

- avoid wearing brightly patterned or reflective clothing as this may not show up well on camera
- speak clearly so your voice can be picked up by the microphone
- look at the camera so you can achieve good eye contact with the doctor
- if you have a question or need help, please ask.

## **What happens at the telehealth video consultation appointment?**

At the start, the reason for the consultation may be explained. Unless already known to the Dr, you will probably be asked some identifying questions such as your name, address, and date of birth to make sure you are the right patient, and quick confirmation of the identities of any other persons present may also be sought. The Dr / specialist will speak with you and ask you questions in the same way as they would at a face-to-face consultation.

## **Who will be present?**

You, the doctor and any other persons who need to be present and this with your permission/consent.

As with a face-to-face appointment, your spouse, partner, family or friend may accompany you if you wish.

## **What if I want to have a private discussion with my doctor/ specialist?**

You may ask your GP (or another support clinician from our team) to step out of the telehealth video consultation at any time if you wish to have a private discussion with the specialist and they will do so provided they think your safety is not at risk.

## **How private is a telehealth video consultation?**

The same privacy and confidentiality requirements that apply to face-to-face consultations apply to telehealth video consultations.

## **What if I need to be examined?**

Normally this is not possible unless you have either a Dr present with you (which is sometimes the case) , a nurse or a physiotherapist. In such instance, the doctor/specialist may ask this support clinician to examine you on their behalf. This may or may not be on camera. Please insure that you are comfortable with this process and indicate if you have any concerns or need anything particular.

## **Will the telehealth video consultation be recorded?**

No. However, if your Dr./specialist thinks it would be helpful for your treatment, they may request for instance for a photograph to be taken of a particular body part or a wound (hand or foot commonly).They would first seek your permission to do so and they would ask you to repeat your consent on camera.

## **What if I feel I can't continue?**

Most patients feel a little nervous at the beginning of their first telehealth 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 a telehealth video consultation.

## **How much will it cost?**

There would be no cost to yourself. Your employer or insurer will cover the costs of the consultation.

## **How can I provide feedback?**

We are keen to get your feedback so we can continue to improve our video consultation services. Our reception staff will be able to provide you with a patient feedback form. We will ask for your permission to share your feedback anonymously with other healthcare professionals and our practice team. You can choose for your feedback to remain confidential.

