

# Telehealth for cancer patients and carers

Your cancer treatment team may be offering you appointments by phone or video instead of face-to-face. These are both types of telehealth. You can still use an interpreter for telehealth appointments if you want to.

## What are the benefits?

Telehealth can:

- enable you to continue your vital health care
- reduce your risk of getting other illnesses like colds, flu and Coronavirus. This is important if your immune system (your body's ability to fight infection) has been weakened by your cancer treatment
- avoid the need to travel to appointments
- save you money on travel and accommodation costs
- be faster if you just need a prescription or have a quick question for your treatment team

## What appointments are best for telehealth?

Telehealth is best for the following types of appointments:

- Where you have an existing relationship with your health professional
- follow-up care
- scan and test results
- advice on symptoms and side effects
- repeat prescriptions
- nutrition and exercise advice
- counselling

Your health professional will tell you if they need to see you in person and will make a follow-up appointment.

## What do I need?

### Video calls:

- a smartphone, iPad/ tablet, laptop or a computer that has a camera, microphone and speakers
- an email address or mobile phone number so they can email or text you the instructions and link
- internet connection

### Phone calls:

- a mobile phone or landline

## Before your telehealth appointment

Check with your health professional if you can see scan or test results.

Let your health service know if you:

- are hard of hearing
- need an interpreter

Make sure you;

- read any instructions
- have a list of questions prepared
- have the email address for your local pharmacy so if you need a prescription your doctor can email the pharmacy any prescriptions.
- have a support person (e.g. friend or relative) with you if needed
- find a quiet place so you won't be interrupted and make sure you don't have a window or light behind you
- do not have your mobile phone on silent
- turn your microphone on (off mute) and your camera is on if you're using a laptop or tablet (iPad)
- set up the screen so you have your face and shoulders in view
- rest your screen on something so you don't have to hold it. This will make it easier for you to concentrate on the call and will also free your hands to write any notes.
- connect a few minutes before your appointment time so you can check everything is working ok.



## During the appointment:

- look at the screen
- speak slowly
- take it in turns to speak one at a time
- if you get cut off, wait for a phone call from your health professional
- write down any instructions and what you need to do next.
- ask all your questions
- ask your doctor if they can share their screen with you when they are going through test or scan results.

## Can I ask for a face-to-face appointment?



Yes.

You should have a face-to-face appointment if:

- it's your first time seeing the doctor
- your health professional has asked to see you in person
- you are not getting better

Or if you:

- need a physical examination, test, treatment or scan
- have more than one appointment at the health centre or hospital
- do not feel comfortable using telehealth
- do not have the technology or cannot use it

## How much will it cost?

Before your appointment, ask your health service if your appointment will be free (bulk billed) and if not, how much you will have to pay.

## Can I have a support person with me for the appointment?



Yes. Just make sure you introduce the person to the health professional at the start of the call/ video as you would if you were meeting in person.

## For information and support contact a cancer nurse

 **13 11 20**

 For other languages call **13 14 50**

 [cancercouncil.com.au](http://cancercouncil.com.au)