

Telehealth Consultations:

In some circumstances it is possible to arrange patients to have a consultation via video conferencing over the internet (visual and audio). Telehealth consultations have many advantages including reducing the waiting time to see your specialist, reducing travel time and cost as well as the inconvenience of having to take time off work.

Some questions you may have:

How can I have a video consultation with my specialist?

To have a video consultation with your specialist, you must be referred by your GP. Both doctors must consider it safe and suitable for you. Not all specialists offer video consultation so your GP will discuss your options with you.

Where do the video consultations take place?

You can participate in a video consultation from our practice.

How private is the video consultation?

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

Who will arrange for this to happen?

We have a video consultation coordinator who arranges video consultations with specialists.

What if I need to cancel my appointment?

Video consultations require a lot of coordination at our end and at the specialist's end so please try to keep your video consultation appointment. If you need to cancel, please let us know immediately. Rescheduling video consultations is more complicated than rescheduling a face-to-face appointment.

How can I prepare for one?

- Arrive at least 15 minutes early to allow for preparation time.
- Avoid wearing brightly patterned or reflective clothing as this may not show up well on camera.
- Switch your mobile off or to silent mode.
- 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 specialist.
- If you have a question or need help during the video consultation just ask.

Who will be present?

It will be yourself, your GP (or another support clinician from our team) and the specialist. Nobody else will be present unless you agree to this in advance. As with face-to-face appointments your spouse, partner, family or friend may accompany you if you wish.

What will happen in the video consultation?

You (and if necessary a support clinician from our practice) and the specialist will be on a TV/video or computer screen at each end of the video consultation.

At the start of the consultation everyone will introduce themselves and the reason for the consultation will be explained. You will be asked some identifying questions such as your name, address and date of birth to make sure the right patient, right doctors and right health records are present. The specialist will speak with you and ask you questions in the same way as they would at a face-to-face consultation.

Am I allowed to have a private consultation with the specialist?

You may ask your GP (or another support clinician from our team) to step out of the 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.

What if I need to be examined?

The specialist may ask your GP or support clinician to examine you on their behalf. This may or may not be on camera. We will respect your privacy and a private area or gown will be provided if you need to remove clothing for an examination to take place.

Will the video consultation be recorded?

No. Our practice does not record video consultations and we do not give patients permission to make their own recordings of a video consultation. If your specialist or your GP thinks it would be helpful for your treatment to be recorded with particular images during your video consultation they would first need to seek your written permission to do so. 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 video consultation because it's a new way of seeing a doctor. However most patients soon feel very comfortable. It's very unlikely you will feel unable to continue with a video consultation but if it does happen you can leave. Your consultation fees may still apply.

How much will it cost?

Generally you will receive two bills for the video consultation. One from your GP (or another member of our clinical team) and one for the distant specialist. Our normal billing process will apply.

Am I eligible for Medicare rebate?

Medicare rebates for video consultations are available to patients from remote, regional and outer metropolitan areas as well as patients of residential aged care facilities or aboriginal medical services anywhere in Australia. If you fall into one of these patient categories and are privately billed you will be eligible for Medicare rebate.

If you have any medical questions about whether a video consultation may be suitable for you, please talk to your GP. Any general questions can be answered by our video consultation coordinator.

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. The contents of which you permit us to share with other health professionals but only after being de-identified in order to preserve your privacy.