

## FAQs and helpful tips for video and phone consults

### General FAQs

#### What kind of medical care can I get through a video or phone consult?

Our doctors and nurses are experts who can help with all kinds of normal medical issues during a video or phone consult. Some types of care may not be suitable for telehealth, such as for serious or urgent medical needs or problems that are likely to require a physical exam.

Some people may find a video or phone consult unsuitable such as those unable to use the technology (e.g. confusion), physically or cognitively disabled, deaf (some deaf and hard-of-hearing patients that can lip-read and/or use the chat function may still be suitable for a video consult), unable to speak or understand English (unless they have access to an interpreter) or visually impaired (telephone may still be an option).

#### How will I know if my medical issues can be treated this way?

When you book your video or phone consult, our reception will let you know whether this option is available. If you booked a

- Video consult – your local practice will provide you with a unique link to the online waiting room
- Phone consult – it is important that you are contactable on the number you have given us, at that agreed appointment time

#### How can the doctor or nurse really know what's wrong if I don't see them in person?

Having a video consult is just like seeing your doctor or nurse at the medical centre. They can see you or your family member through the video screen. But even then, 'seeing' you is less necessary to the consultation than you might think. In fact, it's your patient history that gives our doctors and nurses the background they need to give you the best healthcare advice, which is about 90% of the clinical diagnosis. A video or phone consult is just like having your doctor or nurse visit you at home – no need to drive, sit in traffic, pay for parking or wait in reception around other sick people.

#### How long is a video or phone consult?

Our video and phone appointment times are generally the same as when you visit medical centre. We allow for 10 minutes of face-to-face time with your doctor or nurse and then another 5 minutes for them to complete other tasks, such as writing prescriptions or letters on your behalf.

#### How much are these consults?

The cost to see or speak with a doctor or nurse in a video or phone consult is the same as visiting the medical centre for an appointment in person. The cost is related to the doctor's time rather than the technology used or the location of the consult. People usually find it's quite relaxing having the consult in the comfort of your own home rather than coming into the medical centre.



### How can I pay?

There is a secure Online Payment link on our website. Click the link and pay using credit or debit cards, or by bank transfer following your consult. Please include your first and surname in the reference.

### Can I cancel or change my appointment?

It's always possible to change your appointment and it's best to let us know at least 24 hours ahead of time. Cancelling less than 24 hours before your consult may incur charges.

### I'm not enrolled at The Doctors can I still book a video or phone consult?

Yes, regardless of whether you are an existing patient (enrolled with us) or booking as a casual patient, you can make a telehealth appointment at our practice. As a casual patient without access to the online patient portal it's best to phone reception to discuss these consult options and to make a booking.

## About Your Consult

### Quick tips for the best video or phone consults

For the best results, take a minute or two prior to the beginning of the consult to:

1. Write down what you want to discuss and have a pen and paper handy in case you need to jot any notes down during the consult
2. Consider your privacy - choose somewhere private where you can talk freely and safely. If others are present, let your doctor or nurse, you can also use the chat function
3. Hands-free devices offer a better call experience. If you are using a smartphone or tablet, find a way to prop it so you can move around freely
4. Make sure there is no one else streaming information while you are having your consult (if someone is watching a video on the WiFi network you're using, it will affect your video quality)
5. Visit the online waiting room 5-7 minutes before your appointment time, check in and test your audio and video. Your doctor or nurse will start the call when they are ready.

### How can I get my medication?

Your doctor or nurse can prescribe/arrange medication in all consults. They will send your prescription to your chosen local pharmacy. If you are seeking a long-term prescription for the first time it is generally advisable to visit a doctor in person.

### What happens if I need more time or a follow up consult?

- **Need more time?** If you need more time to discuss your medical issues, please arrange this with your doctor or nurse during the consult. They may suggest booking another telehealth appointment or to visit the practice in person. There may be an additional or new charge for a new consult.
- **Need a follow up appointment?** Simply arrange this with your doctor or nurse before the consult ends. They may suggest booking another telehealth appointment or to visit the practice in person.



### What happens at the end of the consult?

Throughout the consult your doctor or nurse will discuss your medical issues and work with you to build a plan for wellness that you both agree on. Lastly, they will summarise the next steps which may include any or all, of the following:

- Sending an electronic prescription for medicine to a local pharmacy for you to fill
- Arranging another follow-up appointment for you
- Arrange a lab test e.g. a blood test for you
- Arranging an appointment in person for you at the practice
- Writing a referral to a specialist or health service e.g. hospital, physiotherapist
- Emailing you some educational material about your condition/problem
- All consult notes will be sent to your usual GP. You may also decline to do this

### What if I'm not satisfied with the video or phone consult?

We take your care seriously and we welcome your feedback. If you or a family member are not happy with the consultation, please tell the doctor or nurse straight away so they can respond to your concerns. After the consult, if you're still not satisfied with the care you received, you can provide formal feedback [here](#).

## IT, Security and Privacy

### What technology do I need for a video consult?

To have a video consult, you'll need a:

- **computer or laptop with a camera, a tablet or a smart phone** - most modern laptops have an inbuilt camera that is visible at the top of the screen. If you're not sure where to find it or how to use it you may need to get a relative or friend to help with this before the consult.
- **good internet connection** - you can use data, but WiFi will give you a better call quality.

If there are issues with your video connection e.g. the picture stops/freezes or the sound stops, the doctor or nurse will immediately ring you on your mobile number to assist you or to complete the consult on the phone.

### Is it secure and private?

Just like a normal appointment with your doctor or nurse, your telehealth consult will be private and confidential. Only you and the doctor or nurse will see or hear your appointment.

Your information will not be stored in the video consult platform or phone. Your doctor or nurse will take notes in the same system used when you visit the practice in person.

The systems used during video consults meet recommended standards to protect the privacy and security of your visit. Since telehealth consults will take place from your own device and home environment, you also have a role to play in keeping yourself safe online. Follow the [guides from CERT NZ](#) and these [tips and advice for good online safety habits](#).

