

Virtual Consultations (consultations by phone or video)

What is a virtual consultation?

You may not always need to see your healthcare professional in person. Instead, you can sometimes speak to them over the phone or by using the video camera on your smartphone, tablet or computer. This is known as a virtual consultation.

This can save you time as you will not need to travel for a face-to-face appointment. It also helps to stop infections spreading such as coronavirus (COVID-19).

Is a virtual consultation right for me?

Virtual consultations are appropriate for some people, some of the time. This might depend on whether you have access to the right equipment, technology, support, and level of privacy.

Even if you're not confident in using technology, a carer, relative or friend, may be able to help you set it up and get started.

If you have problems finding a private space at home, you could arrange to have your virtual consultation from a different place (for example a friend's house) – or just keep coming to the clinic.

Is a virtual consultation likely to work for my condition?

Research shows that in many but not all cases, a virtual consultation is a safe and convenient alternative to a traditional face-to-face appointment. Your healthcare professional will need to decide whether it is appropriate and safe to do the consultation virtually.

What are the benefits of virtual consultations?

Having a face-to-face appointment isn't always convenient and we know that some people need to come to hospital several times as part of their care. However, sometimes it is possible to have a phone or video consultation from home or in your workplace rather than coming to hospital.

What technology will I need for a phone consultation?

All you need for a phone consultation is access to either a mobile phone or landline.

What technology will I need for a video consultation?

For a video consultation, you'll need a reliable internet connection and the right technology like a smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer.

Your clinic will give you instructions on how to join a video consultation.

At minimum, you will need access to the following:

- A desktop or laptop computer, a tablet or iPad, or a smartphone or iPhone
- A webcam (camera), speakers and microphone - these are almost always already built into laptops or mobile devices
- A good connection to the internet (if you can watch a YouTube video, you can make a video call)
- An internet usage plan that is sufficient to cover the data used by a video call.

How do I prepare for a virtual consultation?

- Write down some questions for your healthcare professional in advance.
- Ensure you raise and discuss any concerns you have.
- Ask your healthcare professional about the next steps regarding your care.
- Have a notepad and pen to hand to capture information.

Where can I get more information about virtual consultations?

For more information, ask your healthcare professional, go to XXX or watch this short video <https://youtu.be/sDmSZyquNGc>