

TELEHEALTH



If you have any English language difficulties, please ask staff to book an interpreter.

From home, contact the Telephone Interpreter Service on 9605 3056.

Services are provided free of charge. Ask staff if this information is available in your preferred language.

What is telehealth?

Telehealth (also known as telemedicine or video consultation) is similar to Skype, and uses computer monitors or TV screens, video cameras and microphones to connect you to health care providers (e.g. specialists, doctors or other healthcare professionals) without you having to leave your current location.

Telehealth is being introduced at Eastern Health as a new way of connecting patients and health care providers to each other, without the need for travelling between facilities. This will reduce your time, costs and stress associated with travelling to an appointment.

A telehealth appointment is just like a normal appointment; only the health care provider you will be seeing and speaking with is on a monitor or TV screen. You will be able to see, hear and talk to them as if they were in the same room as you.

Do I have to participate in a telehealth appointment?

No. You are able to attend a face-to-face appointment if you prefer. A telehealth appointment will only happen if your doctors consider it to be safe and suitable, and you are happy to participate. If you choose not to participate in a telehealth appointment, your decision will be respected, and you will be able to have your appointment in person.

What are the advantages for you of telehealth?

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

- better access to specialist care
- reduced waiting time to see your specialist
- reduced travel time and costs
- improved communication between your health care providers; and
- reduced absence from work.

What are the disadvantages of telehealth?

- Telehealth appointments may not always be clinically appropriate. You may require physical examinations, investigations or tests that require you to attend in person. However, wherever possible, the health care provider with you in the telehealth appointment will assist with the examination, using regular tools like a stethoscope; and
- Poor internet connection may cause the video or sound to fail. If this occurs, you will be offered another telehealth appointment or, if you prefer, you can choose to reschedule for an appointment in person.

What happens in a telehealth appointment?

- A telehealth appointment can be held between any two Eastern Health sites, or from one Eastern Health site to another facility (e.g. Aged Care Residential Facility), depending on the needs of the patient, and the availability of telehealth equipment
- Before your appointment, the health care providers will already have relevant information about you
- It is your choice whether you agree to have other people present. A health care provider or an Aboriginal Health worker can be with you during your consultation, as well as any carers or family members you may wish to have with you for support
- You may ask any of the people present to leave the room at any time if you wish to talk privately with your specialist
- You will be able to see yourself on the screen – this can be turned off if you do not wish to see it
- If you need to be examined, a local health care provider will be there to carry out the examination.

What can I expect as a telehealth patient?

You can expect to:

- receive care from health care providers who are educated and trained to use the telehealth equipment and to conduct telehealth appointments
- always be introduced to everyone in the appointment and have the right to decide whether you want them involved
- choose to end the appointment at any time and ask for an appointment in person
- receive health care that respects your privacy and confidentiality.

How should I prepare for a telehealth appointment?

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

- be at least 10 minutes early to allow for preparation time
- don't wear brightly patterned or reflective clothing as this may not show up well on camera
- switch your mobile phone 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; and
- if you have a question or need help during the consultation, just ask.

Your privacy is important...

Just like normal doctor's appointment, your telehealth appointment will be private and confidential. Whilst Eastern Health uses systems that meet recommended standards to protect the privacy and security of video consultations, it cannot guarantee total protection against hacking or tapping by outsiders. This risk is small, but it does exist.

By agreeing to a telehealth consultation, you give permission to your doctor to release the relevant aspects of your personal health information to those directly involved with your care. Please refer to Eastern Health's *Protecting Your Privacy* brochure for more information about privacy.

Will the telehealth appointment be recorded?

No. Eastern Health does not record telehealth appointments and we do not give patients permission to make their own recordings. If your specialist or your other health care provider thinks it would be helpful for your treatment to record particular images during your appointment, they will first seek your written permission to do so.

What if I need to cancel my appointment?

Telehealth requires a lot of coordination, so please try to keep your appointment. If you need to cancel, please let us know as soon as possible.

How can I provide feedback on my video consultation?

We are keen to get your feedback so we can continue to improve our telehealth services, and will ask you to complete a short Patient Evaluation Survey upon completion of your appointment. If you do not wish to complete an evaluation survey, you do not have to.

What if I have questions?

If you have any questions about whether a telehealth consultation may be suitable for you or what it might involve, please talk to your treating doctor or other health care professional.

Protecting Your Privacy

Eastern Health is committed to protecting your privacy. We will keep your personal information secure and will disclose information about you only when required or permitted by law. We comply with relevant information and privacy legislation. If you would like more information, please ask a staff member or visit our Web site www.easternhealth.org.au
Eastern Health is accredited by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards.

5 Arnold Street, Box Hill, Victoria 3128
1300 342 255

© Eastern Health 2015