

VIRTUAL CARE LETS YOU “VISIT” YOUR DOCTOR FROM ANYWHERE

It’s important to not put off seeing your doctor for regular care, a new health concern, or staying on top of an existing health issue.

Virtual care is another way to receive excellent care from your doctor. Instead of seeing your doctor in person, you can communicate with your doctor using your phone or your computer, whatever you are comfortable with.

How does virtual care work?

No matter how you communicate virtually, to protect your privacy, your doctor will need your consent – verbally or in writing – before using any type of virtual care.

By telephone

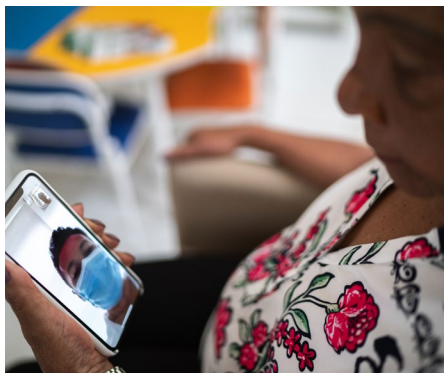
Sometimes you can use a phone for virtual care – a cell phone, smartphone or land line. If you or a family member don’t feel well, contact your doctor’s office and explain what’s going on. Depending on the situation, a phone visit can be scheduled and the doctor will call you.

Video visits using a computer, tablet, or smartphone

Sometimes your doctor can set up a video visit using a platform like FaceTime or Zoom or a medical platform like Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN). You’ll be able to see each other on your computer or phone screen. Video visits work well if you need to show your doctor something like a rash.

Emails and texts

Sometimes your doctor will communicate with using emails or texts. Ask your doctor if you can use email or text to communicate.



When does virtual care work best?

- When your doctor doesn’t need to physically examine or treat you – for example, for regular follow-up visits, discussing test results or medications, or discussing mental health concerns
- For patients who don’t feel comfortable going out or taking public transit during the pandemic
- For patients living in rural or remote areas, who have difficulty getting around, or have issues that make trips outside the home risky during the pandemic

However, virtual care doesn’t work when you need a test or injection, or when the doctor needs to examine you in person. Your doctor will decide if a virtual visit works for your situation.

Your doctor’s office is a safe space

Some people have avoided visiting their family doctor or specialist because they’re worried about exposure to COVID-19.

It’s safe to go to your doctor’s office. Every doctor takes extra care to protect you from COVID-19 infection.

Exam rooms and equipment are sanitized between patients, you can expect staying apart in waiting rooms, patients and staff are required to wear masks, and doctors wear personal protective equipment.

If you feel you need to see your doctor in person, don’t wait – call and make an appointment!

The OMA thanks OntarioMD for providing portions of this Community InfoBulletin. ■