

Telehealth Guide

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TELEHEALTH

Sometimes face-to-face consultation with patients isn't possible. Video and telephone consultations – collectively, “telehealth” – help protect both patients and providers, preventing the spread of infection, particularly during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Videoconference services are the preferred approach for substituting a face-to-face consultation. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, providers can also offer audio-only services via telephone if video is not available.

Telehealth enables GPs and other health providers to see patients remotely, so that people with symptoms can self-isolate. It is particularly helpful for patients with mobility issues as well as people in remote areas.



RECOMMENDED VIDEO CONSULTATION SYSTEM

Although many different video conference systems are available, the PHN supports the use of one video consultation system across all health services.

The Commonwealth government has provided funding for [healthdirect Video Call](#) – a comprehensive, secure and reliable video consulting service which follows the Australian Government cyber security guidelines and safeguards privacy.

healthdirect Video Call is currently free for use by:

- General Practitioners,
- Allied Health professionals, and
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS).

Other video consultation platforms may store call details outside Australia, which may put clinicians at risk of breach of privacy legislation without informed patient consent.

When using [healthdirect Video Call](#), both patients and health professionals can be confident that all video, audio, chat and shared screen activity is between patients and clinicians only and is fully encrypted.

GET SET UP TO PROVIDE VIDEO CONSULTATIONS TO PATIENTS

Getting set up to provide video consultations to patients is easy!



1. Insurance

Ensure telehealth is covered by your individual and practice professional indemnity plans



2. Equipment

Check that you have the necessary equipment for video consultation



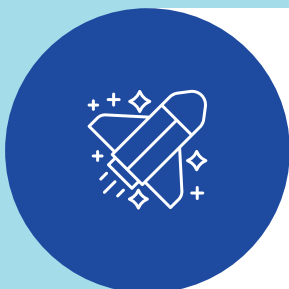
3. Registration

Email telehealth@thephn.com.au to register for **healthdirect** Video Call



4. Setup

The PHN will set up your virtual clinic and give you the details



5. Launch

Log in and start seeing patients via video consultation!

FREE & EASY REGISTRATION

REGISTER NOW FOR FREE VIDEO CONFERENCING SETUP

The PHN offers free setup for new [healthdirect Video Call](#) users.

For more information on setting up [healthdirect VideoCall](#) for your practice, or to register now, email telehealth@thephn.com.au.

BEST PRACTICE VIDEO CONSULTATIONS

Video consultations most closely replicate the face-to-face consultation experience, providing the highest possible standard of care.

Review the clinical processes described on the telehealth pages in the [Hunter New England HealthPathways](#) and [Central Coast HealthPathways](#) for pre-, during- and post-consultation activities.

To ensure a constructive and worthwhile consultation, make effort to maintain patient trust, communicate clearly and engage attentively with your patient.



PRE-CONSULTATION

PATIENT INFORMATION

When booking a video consultation for a patient, make sure that you:

- Provide patient with video consultation information and fee details, including any out-of-pocket costs.
- Determine MBS telehealth item eligibility.
- Confirm that the patient is able to participate in a video consultation.
- Book a video consultation appointment, following our [simple, one-page practice workflow guide](#).
- Review patient records and reason for appointment.
- Obtain informed financial consent.

ENVIRONMENT

- Ensure you consult from a private location in which your consultations will not be seen, overheard or interrupted. The only people who should be able to hear your conversation are the video consultation participants.
- Ensure you are well-lit - normal room lighting is usually sufficient.
- Avoid sitting directly beneath the light source if possible. Side-lighting works well.
- Be aware of incidental movement behind you. Ensure that you aren't sitting in front of a window to minimise distraction for participants.

EQUIPMENT

- Familiarise yourself with the equipment and software before the consultation.
- Understand what to do if things go wrong, and how to fix basic problems.
- Know who to contact if you can't resolve any problems that do occur.
- Charge and test your equipment before the call.
- [Run a test call](#) or call a colleague to make sure everything works.
- Be mindful of current audio and video settings.

MAKING THE CALL FROM A DESKTOP OR LAPTOP COMPUTER

- Eliminate distractions and noises from your computer and surroundings, such as computer and mobile phone notifications.
- Try to ensure that software updates do not occur during video consultations.
- Only run the software you need to use while in the video call: this increases the resources available to your computer.

SET UP THE CAMERA IN A GOOD POSITION

- Use a professional/neutral backdrop and good lighting.
- Place the camera in a location where the participants stay within camera view.
- Position your web camera so you are looking directly at the patient at eye level, if possible.
- Keep the participants centred in the camera view.

CHOOSE MICROPHONE AND SPEAKERS BASED ON LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

- Laptop microphones and speakers are adequate but be aware of echo or feedback during conversations.
- Headsets work well for single-person locations.
- Use a noise-cancelling speakerphone device when multiple people are sharing the same room.
- Position the microphone so that voices are clear and neither too loud nor soft.

DURING CONSULTATION

GETTING STARTED

- [Join the video call](#) with your patient in the virtual consultation room.
- Adjust your microphone and camera as required so that everyone can see and hear.
- Introduce everyone attending the consultation.
- Hold the consultation, applying the relevant professional standards, as you would normally.

ETIQUETTE

- Wear appropriate clothing - dress as you would when holding in-person consultations.
- Wear neutral, muted solid colours where possible. Avoid patterns, stripes, dots, white and red, which can all cause distracting screen effects.

BE MINDFUL OF BODY LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOUR

- Remember that the other participants can see you - act like they're in the room with you.
- Avoid raising your voice.

HAVE ALTERNATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION AVAILABLE

- Be prepared to contact other participants by phone if something goes wrong with the video consultation.

FOCUS ON THE CALL

- Assure your patient that they have your full attention, showing eye contact, positive body language and attentiveness.
- Do not check your email or phone while in a video call.
- Look at the camera when you talk, not at the screen.

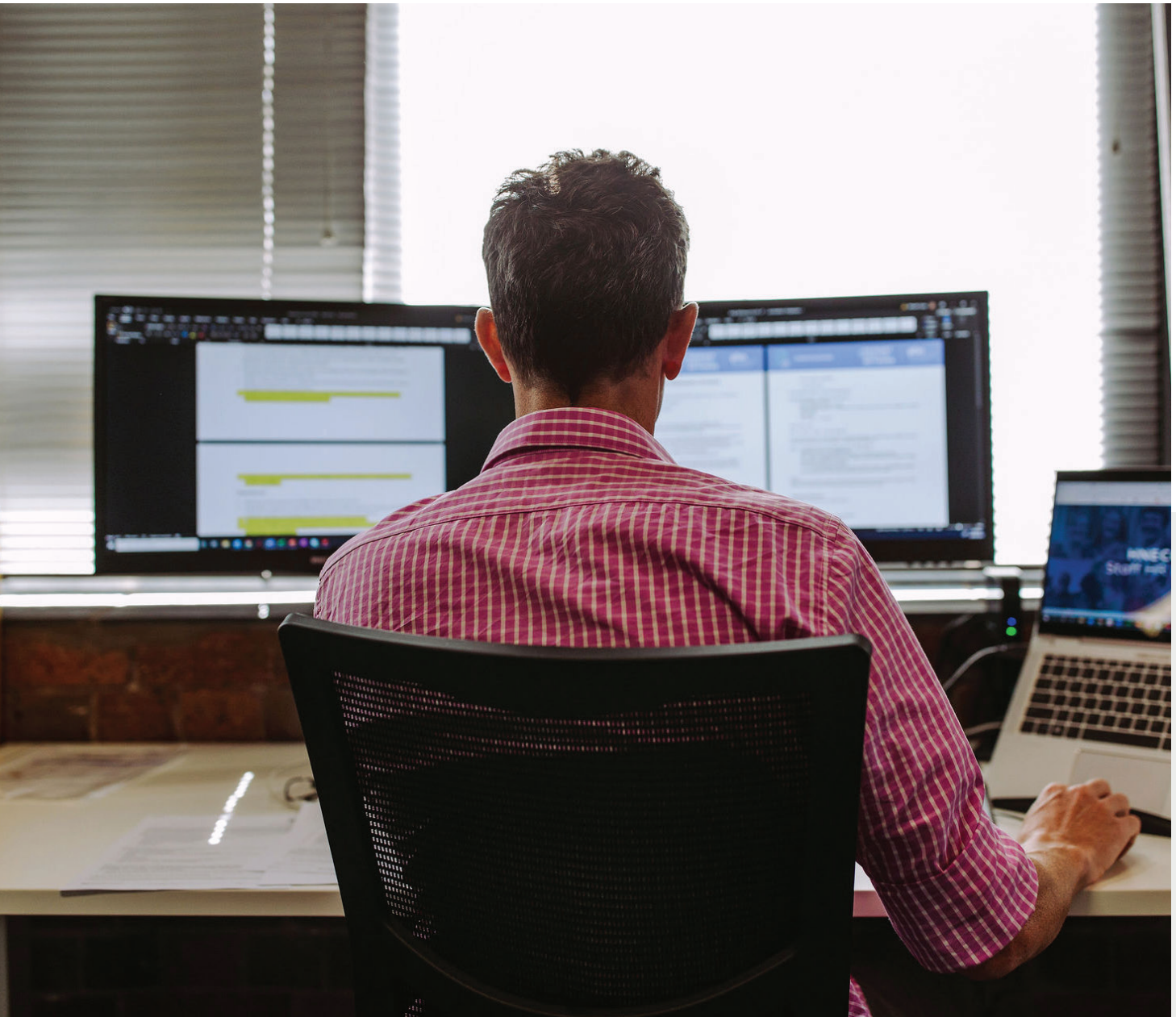
UNDERSTAND THE SUBTLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEETING VIA VIDEO AND MEETING FACE-TO-FACE

- There is always a small amount of lag in conversations. Be patient and allow participants time to finish speaking.
- Use the [teach-back method](#) to ensure patient understanding.



POST-CONSULTATION

- When the call ends, ensure all video and audio equipment is switched off.
- Check the patient understands the outcome of the consultation.
- Update the patient record with your consultation notes as soon as possible.
- Organise follow up and supplementary resources, information, education and links required.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY OFFER VIDEO CONSULTATIONS IN PREFERENCE TO TELEPHONE CONSULTATIONS?

Providing medical care via video conference improves patients' access to care and helps to create a more sustainable health care system.

Being unable to see a patient means that practitioners must make decisions with less information than they would receive if they were conducting a face-to-face consultation.

Although physical examination is not possible in a video consultation, being able to see their patient provides health professionals with much more information than they receive when holding a telephone consultation.

For example, while people can sound positive over the telephone, in a video consultation, health professionals may observe signs of trauma, domestic violence, depression or anxiety through body language, reactions or physical wounds.

Video consultation provides greater opportunity for practitioners to observe these signs and symptoms, helping them to ensure that the patient receives a suitable and high-quality treatment.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF VIDEO CONSULTATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS?

Greater depth and detail - The [Royal Australian College of General Practitioners reports](#) that “the addition of visual images... adds value to any telehealth consultation and can improve both quality and safety”.

Non-verbal visual observations - Patients can communicate with practitioners non-verbally, through writing, signs, signals and body language.

Time savings - [The British Medical Journal reports](#) that video consultations save time, as (on average):

- video consultations were almost four minutes shorter than face-to-face consultations, and

- patients raised fewer problems than they did in face-to-face consultations.

Patient satisfaction - Australia's Health Panel found that 83% of interviewees were likely to use - or would definitely use - telehealth services in the future.

In a [HotDoc survey](#), patients expressed their preference for telehealth appointments with their current GP, particularly for results, repeat prescriptions, specialist referral and follow-up appointments.

Meeting patient demand for video consultation is likely to increase satisfaction with the services offered by clinicians.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF VIDEO CONSULTATION FOR PATIENTS?

I was more relaxed in my consultation. I was in my familiar environment and the specialist and I were both at ease. I didn't have the stress of getting the two people I care for sorted before the 90 minute drive to the city hospital for this appointment. I saved money on fuel and parking fees. I didn't have to sit in a full waiting room. I didn't have to turn down work for that entire day because of the travel time and waiting room time blowouts. The benefits of telehealth are immense. - Australia's Health Panel contributor

Time and cost savings – Patients save time and travel costs by attending the consultation at a location and time that is convenient for them.

The Consumers' Health Foundation of Australia reported that the [Telehealth services survey](#) found that over 80% of people offered telehealth services used it, and a similar proportion viewed the service as being excellent or good quality.

Risk reduction – Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when both patients and practitioners have heightened safety and security concerns, video consultation reduces risks and most closely replicates the face-to-face consultation experience, providing the highest possible standard of care.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF NOT OFFERING VIDEO CONSULTATION TO PATIENTS?

It is important that practices and practitioners are aware of the MBS rules and stay on top of any changes.

(See COVID-19 MBS Items on [Hunter New England HealthPathways page](#) and on [Central Coast HealthPathways page](#)).

Remember, when face-to-face consultations are not available, videoconference services are the preferred approach for substituting a face-to-face consultation.

If video is not available, health practitioners will also be able to offer audio-only services via telephone.

It is in **patients' best interests** to have the most comprehensive consultation available, with the highest possible standard of care.

It is in **practitioners' best interests** to minimise the risk of missing something in a triage or consultation without visual examination or the ability to observe body language and comprehension.

No practitioner wants to be in breach of the MBS guidelines, nor to run the risk of receiving an unfavourable audit, with the associated consequences.

Reduce your risk – supplement your existing service offering with video consultation to protect your practice and practitioners.

WHEN ARE VIDEO, TELEPHONE AND FACE-TO-FACE CONSULTATIONS APPROPRIATE?

Although some issues can be managed through more than one type of consultation, [MBS Online](#) guidance is that video conference is the preferred approach for substituting a face-to-face consultation.

(See COVID-19 MBS Items on [Hunter New England HealthPathways page](#) and on [Central Coast HealthPathways page](#)).

The table below provides guidance on which consultation type may best suit various scenarios, when face-to-face consultation is not available or desirable.

However, every health professional must exercise judgement about the appropriateness of video, telephone and/or face-to-face consultations, considering the clinical risks of each, as well as the risks of not conducting a consultation at all.

SITUATION	VIDEO	TELEPHONE	FACE-TO-FACE
Any condition/ scenario where telehealth protects vulnerable people (e.g. older patients and patients with comorbidities who are at increased risk if they contract COVID-19)	●		
You are working remotely or self-isolating	●		
The patient has a family member or carer to support them	●		
The patient needs reassurance	●		
Chronic disease management, especially where the patient is fairly stable and has monitoring devices (if required) at home	●		
Repeat prescriptions	●		
Referral letters	●		
Exploring mental health issues	●		
Exploring diet and physical activity	●		
Skin conditions	●		
Relatively straightforward clinical needs, short-term illnesses or treatment requests (e.g. straightforward urinary tract or upper respiratory tract infections)	●		
You have access to the patient's records	●		
You can provide all the necessary advice or information verbally or electronically	●		
The patient has capacity to make decisions about their treatment	●		
Counselling services	●		
The patient needs to lip read	●		
The patient is from a non-English-speaking background	●		
The patient needs a translator	●		
The patient needs to see information (e.g. an instructional video, diagram or flowchart)	●		

SITUATION	VIDEO	TELEPHONE	FACE-TO-FACE
The patient needs to provide images, videos, photos, diaries, progress reports, etc.	•		
Any consultation where the trade-off between attending in person and staying at home favours the latter	•		
The patient lacks adequate internet access		•	
The patient does not have access to a computer, tablet or mobile with a camera and microphone		•	
Potentially serious, high-risk conditions requiring physical examination, particularly patients with chronic disease who are unable to self-monitor appropriately and patients at high risk for poor outcomes from COVID-19			•
Internal examination is required and cannot be deferred to support clinical decision making			•
The patient's ability to communicate by telephone or video consultation is compromised and they do not have a support person to assist them during the consultation			•
Situations where there is any doubt about the clinical appropriateness of a telephone or video consultation			•
Conditions which require physical examination (e.g. listening to heart or lungs, feeling the abdomen, taking temperature)			•
Procedures (e.g. excising skin lesions, taking swabs and smears, inserting contraceptive devices, giving injections)			•
Checking blood pressure (if unable to be monitored remotely)			•
Routine check-ups and screening tests (if unable to be postponed)			•
You are not the patient's usual GP or doctor			•
You do not have access to the patient's records			•
The patient has not consented to a video consultation			•
The patient has complex clinical needs or requests higher risk treatments			•

SITUATION	VIDEO	TELEPHONE	FACE-TO-FACE
You are unsure about the patient's capacity to decide on their treatment			•
It is difficult to determine by telehealth whether the patient has all the information about treatment options that they want and need			•

These examples were sourced from [this article](#) by Dr Brett Montgomery, Senior Lecturer in General Practice at the University of Western Australia, these [RACGP guidelines](#), the [Royal Australasian College of Physicians Members' Survey](#) and the [UK General Medical Council](#).

Visit the [Australian Department of Health website](#) for resources on managing patients who have tested positive to COVID-19, for health professionals (including aged care providers, pathology providers and healthcare managers).

Call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 for guidance on managing pre-screening for patients who may be at risk of COVID-19.



MUST I USE *healthdirect* VIDEO CALL?

Health professionals are not obligated to use *healthdirect* Video Call, but must ensure that their chosen video consultation system meets clinical requirements and satisfies privacy laws.

To assist providers with their privacy obligations, a [privacy checklist for telehealth services](#) is available on [MBS Online](#).

Always check video conferencing settings to ensure that:

- there is no recording of your consultation,
- only the appropriate patient can join a consultation at the designated time, and
- no patient can enter a consultation without the practitioner's permission.

Use the resources below to ensure that your chosen video consultation system meets clinical requirements and satisfies privacy laws:

- [Cyber Security](#) (Australian Digital Health Agency)
- [Privacy for Health Service Providers](#) (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner)
- [Australian Cyber Security Centre website](#)

CAN I USE *healthdirect* VIDEO CALL ON MY PHONE?

Yes. Open a browser window and go to <https://vcc.healthdirect.org.au/login>.

Log in, and you will have access to the same features available through the web portal when its used on a laptop or tablet.

IS VIDEO CONSULTATION PRIVATE AND SECURE?

The PHN recommends use of a secure and reliable video consultation service, such as *healthdirect* Video Call, which follows the Australian Government cyber security guidelines and safeguards privacy.

Both patients and health professionals can be confident that all video, audio, chat and shared screen activity during video consultation using *healthdirect* Video Call are between patients and clinicians only and are fully encrypted.

Assure patients that:

- you will consult with them from a private place where you will not be overheard or interrupted (especially if consulting from home),
- their consultation details and treatment information will be recorded in your normal clinical system,
- any personal information you receive from the patient or obtain through a video or telephone consultation will be safely transferred to your normal clinical system, or deleted if not required, as soon as possible.

The use of video consultation does not impact or change the normal clinical obligations required of health professionals when engaging with patients, so:

- continue to use your existing practice management software for clinical notes,
- share these resources with your patient, and
- ensure you apply the relevant professional standards, as you would normally.

HOW DO DIFFERENT VIDEO CONFERENCE SYSTEMS COMPARE?

The PHN has compared the features, costs and security of commonly used video consultation systems.

Email telehealth@thephn.com.au with the name of your current video conferencing system (if applicable). We'll help you compare options, minimise risk and maximise security in video consultation.

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED FOR VIDEO CONSULTATION?

In order to provide video consultations to patients, you will need the following equipment:

- A phone or computer (see [Minimum device and operating requirements](#))
- Microphone (may be built into phone or computer)
- Camera or webcam (may be built into phone or computer)
- Keyboard
- Mouse
- Internet connection with sufficient speed ([SpeedTest](#)) and data (see [Technical requirements for Video Call](#))

PHN technology provider Brennan IT can help you determine the most suitable products for your practice, and purchase what you need.

Call them on 02 4969 0690 for advice and guidance on purchasing the right equipment for your business.

WHAT BROWSER SHOULD I USE?

Use the latest version of Google Chrome or Safari for best quality video consultation.

Visit [What's my browser?](#) to check your web browser and version (including whether it is the latest version available or not).

HOW DO I INSTALL GOOGLE CHROME?

Visit the [Google Chrome website](#) and follow the instructions.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE THE LATEST VERSION OF GOOGLE CHROME?

In the address bar, type: `chrome://help/` and press Enter. This will open Chrome's "About" page. The text below the version number will indicate whether you have the current version.

If a newer version is available, Chrome may update automatically.



Google Chrome



Google Chrome is up to date
Version 87.0.4280.88 (Official Build) (x86_64)

Automatic updates are turned on [Learn more](#)

Get help with Chrome



Report an issue



WHAT DOES VIDEO CONSULTATION COST?

The cost of providing video consultations will vary depending on the system selected, equipment required, and other factors.

Video consultation can also save time and expenses such as travel, PPE (e.g. masks, gowns, gloves, etc.) and room and clinic space.

MBS telehealth items

The resources below will help you to understand what MBS items can be used for Telehealth, including additions.

- MBS Online: [COVID-19 Telehealth Items Guide](#)
- Hunter New England HealthPathways: [COVID-19 MBS Items](#)
- Central Coast HealthPathways: [COVID-19 MBS Items](#)
- Medicare Australia: [Telehealth](#)

If you are part of the Hunter, New England or Central Coast regions, you can also contact your Primary Care Improvement Officer (PCIO) for more information.

Video consultation system costs

Comparable video consultation systems that have been developed specifically for the health industry range from AUD\$19.95 per month for Allied Health professionals to AUD\$45.00 per month for GP users, and it is expected that *healthdirect* Video Call will be priced similarly.

HOW DO I USE VIDEO CONSULTATION APPROPRIATELY?

We've prepared a simple, [one-page summary of practice information and workflows](#) to help you offer video consultations to patients. It outlines the simple steps to:

- Implementing *healthdirect* Video Call in your practice,
- How to book and commence a video consultation,
- How to manage patients in the waiting room, and
- What to do after the consultation.

WHERE DO I GET HELP TO SET UP VIDEO CONSULTATION?

We're here to help.

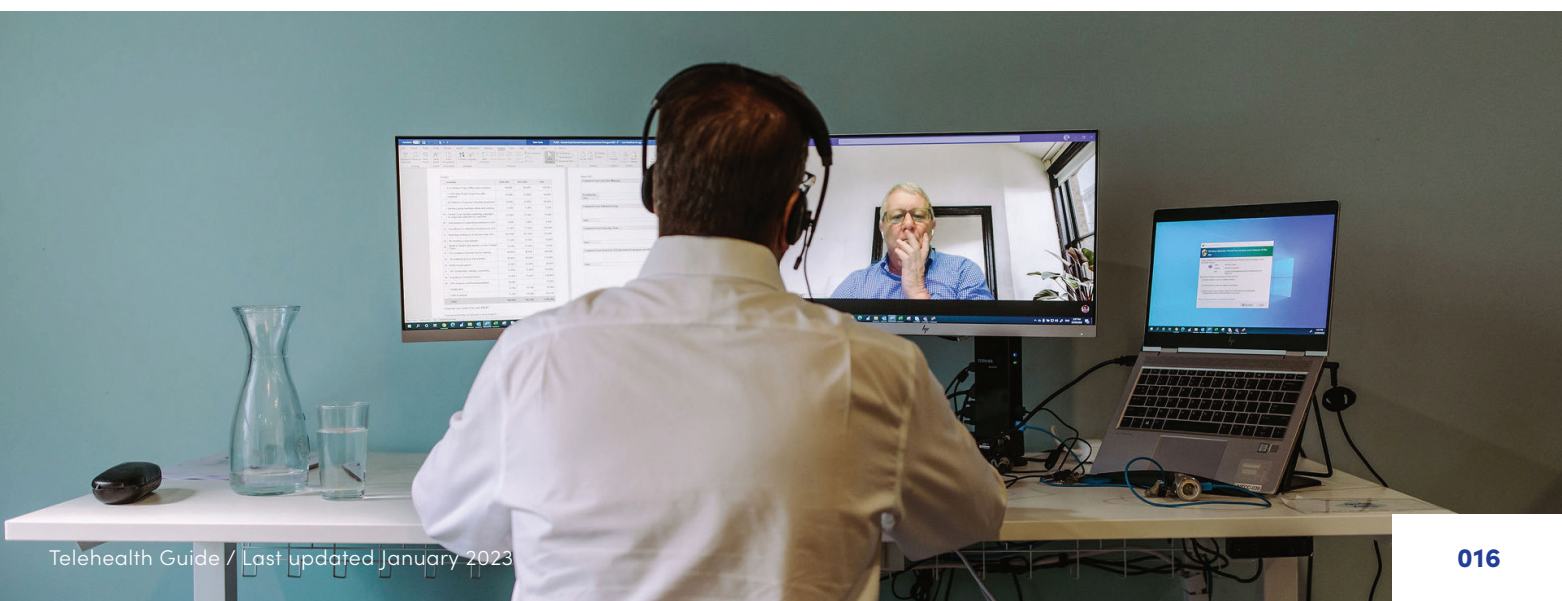
Users of [healthdirect Video Call](#) can access online resources and receive training directly from *healthdirect* Australia, free of charge.

We provide demonstrations of *healthdirect* Video Call to help GPs, AMS, Practice Managers, administrators and Allied Health professionals understand and become familiar with the features and functions.

We also offer free registration and setup for users - email telehealth@thepnh.com.au to register now. We'll set up your virtual clinic so you can log in and get started.

WILL THE PHN SUPPORT *healthdirect* VIDEO CALL REGISTRATION AND SETUP ON AN ONGOING BASIS?

Yes, the PHN will continue to provide free setup for users as long as *healthdirect* Australia permits.



HOW AM I REMUNERATED FOR PROVIDING SERVICES VIA TELEHEALTH?

Read the resources below to learn more about the telehealth MBS item numbers, including those that have been added.

- [COVID-19 Telehealth Items Guide](#) (MBSOnline)
- [COVID-19 MBS Items](#) (Hunter New England HealthPathways)
- [COVID-19 MBS Items](#) (Central Coast HealthPathways)
- [Telehealth](#) (Medicare Australia)

HOW WILL MY PATIENTS KNOW VIDEO CONSULTATION IS AVAILABLE?

A [HotDoc survey](#) found that patients who have had a telehealth appointment are much more likely to want to continue using telehealth.

However, the survey also found that 42% of patients didn't know (or weren't sure) that their GP offered telehealth.

Make sure your patients know you provide video consultation by:

- Making it a habit at the end of each consultation to notify patients that you offer video consultation, and [explain which services are available](#),
- Booking follow up appointments via video consultation (if it is suitable and the patient consents),
- Promoting your video consultation offering:
 - › in signage and information at your practice/facility,
 - › on your website, by adding a video call button using [these instructions](#), if you use *healthdirect* Video Call,
 - › on your social media pages, and
 - › through SMS broadcasts
- Sharing [patient](#) and [practitioner](#) video guides on your website or by email, and
- Listing video consultation as the first appointment option on your website.

CAN MY PATIENTS USE VIDEO CONSULTATION?

Most video conferencing systems are fairly simple and easy for patients to use. Many patients with a smart phone, tablet or laptop computer will be able to participate in a video consultation.

If you use [healthdirect Video Call](#), your patients will not need to download anything. They will receive one link by SMS or email, which they click to join the consultation.

You might also like to:

- sign up for free training for your practice manager and administrators so they can support patients prior to and on the day of consultation,
- ask your patients whether a family member or carer can help them to participate in a video consultation,
- Play [this video for patients](#) on the television in your waiting room,
- Tailor [this Patient Information Leaflet](#) to your practice and give it to your patients, and
- Share this guidance with your patients, to help them know what to do.

CAN MY PATIENTS' NEEDS BE MET BY VIDEO CONSULTATION?

Review the [services are available via video consultation](#) and determine whether video consultation is suitable for the type of service required.

If it is, consider whether the patient has the equipment and ability to participate in a video consultation (with a carer or family member, if necessary).

Reassure your patient that video consultation will not be used if it is not suitable for their needs.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS IF THE VIDEO CONSULTATION IS DELAYED?

If the GP is running late, a practice administrator should notify the patient of the delay and if necessary, organise an alternative date and time.

If a patient needs to change the appointment date or time, they should inform the practice and request a revised appointment time for the video consultation.

CAN I GET A TRANSLATOR FOR MY PATIENT?

Yes. Organise an interpreter through the [Translating & Interpreting Service](#).

Utilise these resources for consultations with people of non-English-speaking backgrounds.

DO PATIENTS NEED TO CONSENT TO VIDEO CONSULTATION?

Patient consent is mandatory for video consultations.

Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF) must maintain patient consent on residents' records.

The [NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal \(NCAT\) Guardianship Division](#) provides information on consent to medical treatment for people who lack capacity to consent for themselves.

WHAT DO I DO IF MY PATIENT GIVES ME THIS HAND SIGNAL?

All health professionals should be aware of the possibility that patients they consult with may be victims of domestic violence. Be aware that some patients may use [this domestic violence hand signal](#) to indicate they are in an unsafe situation and/or not able to talk freely.

If a patient gives you the domestic violence hand signal, do not respond verbally. Instead, acknowledge that you've received the message by nodding or signalling back with an 'okay' sign or thumbs up, and continue your conversation.

Once the consultation has ended, call the NSW Domestic Violence Line on 1800 656 463, or other appropriate services, to get help for your patient.

HOW WILL MY PATIENTS KNOW WHAT REBATES ARE AVAILABLE FOR TELEHEALTH CONSULTATIONS?

Give your patients the [COVID-19 Telehealth Services Consumer Factsheet](#) (MBS Online), and explain what rebates are available to them.

IS MY INTERNET SERVICE SUFFICIENT FOR VIDEO CONSULTATION?

To work smoothly, [healthdirect Video Call](#) requires a minimum broadband speed of 0.350 Mbps upstream and downstream.

Both you and your patients can check internet speed at [Speedtest.net](#).

Close other applications on your phone or computer to maximise your video consultation.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE A PROBLEM DURING VIDEO CONSULTATION?

Clinicians: Check the [healthdirect troubleshooting guide](#) to resolve any problems encountered during a video consultation, or try reconnecting to the consultation via the waiting room.

Patients: Check the [healthdirect troubleshooting guide for patients](#) or try reconnecting to the call by opening the link again.

DOES VIDEO CONSULTATION CHANGE HOW PRESCRIPTIONS ARE DELIVERED TO PHARMACIES?

Health professionals should mail or email a prescription to the patient or pharmacist.

[RACGP guidance](#) provides more detailed guidance on providing a pharmacy prescription following a telehealth consultation:

- Print the prescription and sign it as per usual practice.
- Create a digital copy of the signed prescription (a photo or pdf) and send the prescription via email, text or fax to the patient (use a practice email address/text message if possible).
- Ask the patient if they would like the prescription sent directly to their pharmacy of choice and/or sent directly to them.
- Send the digital prescription directly to the pharmacy and/or the patient via email, text or fax.

HOW DO I FIND A GP, PHARMACY OR PALLIATIVE CARE SUPPORT SERVICE THAT IS OPEN AFTER HOURS?

Call [healthdirect](#) on 1800 022 222. [healthdirect](#) is funded by the Federal, State and Territory Governments and provides trusted health information and advice online and over the phone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[healthdirect](#) provides the [National Health Services Directory](#), which allows consumers to easily search for the closest doctor, pharmacy or other health service that is open now (including after hours).

NSW patients receiving palliative care, as well as their carers and families, can access a new service for additional advice and support during the after-hours period.

The NSW Palliative Care After Hours Helpline is a free service, available within NSW on weekdays from 5pm to 9am, on weekends and public holidays on 1800 548 225.



RESOURCES

TELEHEALTH RESOURCES

- Hunter New England HealthPathways (PHN)
 - › [Telehealth](#)
 - › [COVID-19 MBS items](#) (see "[COVID-19 MBS Items](#)")
- Central Coast HealthPathways (PHN)
 - › [Telehealth](#)
 - › [COVID-19 MBS items](#) (see "[COVID-19 MBS Items](#)")
- [Telehealth Guidance for Health Practitioners](#) (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority)
- [Telehealth for NSW Health clinicians](#) (Agency for Clinical Innovation)
- [Guidelines for technology-based patient consultations](#) (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority)
- [Services, payments and programs for health professionals](#) (Services Australia)
- [Better Access Telehealth Services for people in rural and remote areas](#) (Australian Government Department of Health)
- [Virtual Care Playbook](#) (Canadian Medical Association, The College of Family Physicians of Canada & the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada)

GENERAL PRACTITIONER RESOURCES

COVID-19 resources

Call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 for information on coronavirus (COVID-19). The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Hunter New England HealthPathways (PHN)
 - › [Telehealth](#)
 - › [COVID-19 MBS items](#)
- Central Coast HealthPathways (PHN)
 - › [Telehealth](#)
 - › [COVID-19 MBS items](#)
- [Telehealth - keeping us safe during COVID-19](#) (PHN)
- [COVID-19 Telehealth Guides](#) (Australasian Telehealth Society & Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine)
- [COVID-19: A Remote Assessment in Primary Care](#) (British Medical Journal)
- [Video Consultations for COVID-19](#) (British Medical Journal)
- [COVID-19 Telehealth Guides](#) (Australasian Telehealth Society)
- [Telehealth for Global Emergencies: COVID-19](#) (The University of Queensland Centre for Online Health)

Telehealth resources

- [Telehealth resources](#) (RACGP)
- [Guide to providing telephone and video consultations in general practice](#) (RACGP)
- [Video consultations in General Practice - step by step](#) (RACGP)
- [Standards for General Practices offering video consultations](#) (RACGP)
- [Telehealth Video Consultation Guide](#) (RACGP)
- [Telehealth resources](#) (RACGP)
- [Telehealth resources](#) (Agency for Clinical Innovation)
- [How is General Practice using Telehealth?](#) (PHN)
- [Advice in Risk Management when Using Video Conferencing Software for Clinical Video Consultations](#) (Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine)



- [How to do a high-quality remote consultation](#) (Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine)
- [Telehealth Hub](#) (Digital Health CRC)
- [Telehealth](#) (NSW Rural Doctors Network)
- [COVID-19 Telehealth Guides](#) (Australasian Telehealth Society)
- [How Allied Health Professionals are using telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (PHN)
- [Telehealth Guide for Allied Health](#) (497 KB pdf) (PHN)
- [How Allied Health is using Telehealth](#) (PHN)

Allied Health professionals' resources

- [Using digital health technology in Allied Health care](#) (Australian Digital Health Agency)
- [Telehealth Business Chat](#) (Exercise and Sports Science Australia, 35 mins)
- [Best practice examples of using telehealth in your practice](#) (Exercise and Sports Science Australia, 38 mins)
- [Delivering exercise services online](#) (Exercise and Sports Science Australia)
- [Australian Physiotherapy Association - telehealth resources and billing information](#) (Australian Psychological Society)
- [Telehealth resources and billing information](#) (Australian Psychological Society)
- [Rebates for telehealth webinar](#) (Allied Health Professions Australia)
- [Digital resources](#) (Allied Health Professions Australia)

RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS

COVID-19 resources

- [COVID-19 Telehealth](#) (PatientInfo, PHN)
- [COVID-19 Telehealth Services Consumer Factsheet](#) (MBSOnline)

Telehealth resources

If your patient may need assistance to participate in a video consultation, ask them whether a family member or carer can help them on the day, and share the following resources with them in advance.

- [Telehealth](#) (PatientInfo, PHN)
- [Get the Most Out of Your Video Consultation](#) (Juntos)
- [How to describe your symptoms to health professionals](#) (PHN)
- [Home Medicines Service - Information for Consumers](#) (Australian Government Department of Health)

healthdirect Video Call resources

- [Introduction to healthdirect Video](#)

[Call](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)

- [healthdirect video for patients](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- [Video Call tips for patients](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- [Troubleshooting guide for patients](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- [Step-by-step Video Call guide](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- [Browser information](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)

To get the most out of a video consultation, advise your patients:

- To attend from a quiet place, free of distractions,
- Turn off television, radio and phone notifications,
- Sit where they can be seen clearly (i.e. do not sit with their back to a window),
- To close other applications on their phone or computer to optimise their video consultation,
- To position their laptop/phone so it is stable and at eye level,
- To be punctual, prepare in advance and login to their consultation (i.e. click the link provided) five minutes prior to their appointment time, and
- To cancel or reschedule if they are unable to attend.



RESOURCES FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

COVID-19 resources

- [COVID-19 GP Checklist: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People](#) (Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW)
- [COVID-19: Telehealth Information for AH&MRC Member Services](#) (Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW)
- [COVID-19: Telehealth Services for Aboriginal Communities](#) (Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW)
- [Managing COVID-19 in Aboriginal Communities](#) (PHN)

Telehealth resources

- [Tips on conducting Telehealth with Aboriginal patients](#) (PHN)
- [Telehealth - Supporting Indigenous People](#) (Services Australia)
- [Principles for Telehealth Consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) (Hunter New England HealthPathways; Central Coast HealthPathways)

- [Conducting 715 health assessments via Telehealth](#) (PHN)
- [Culturally safe telehealth services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients](#) (PHN)

Resources for consultations with people of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds

- [Telephone Consultations with Patients Requiring an Interpreter](#) (RACGP)
- [Interpreter services](#) (Hunter New England HealthPathways; Central Coast HealthPathways)
- [The Translating & Interpreting Service](#) (Australian Government)

RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITY (RACF) RESOURCES



Appointments via video consultation are particularly useful for patients living in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF), who may have trouble getting out to appointments.

Video consultation provides patients with access to a GP when it might not otherwise be possible

(e.g. during COVID-19, on a day the GP isn't scheduled to visit, or when the resident is unwell).

Video consultations do not replace face-to-face consultations and not suitable for all appointments.

However, where suitable, video consultations offer benefits to GP and residents of RACF.

RESIDENT / RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITY	
Less patient distress	Sees the

RESIDENT / RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITY	GENERAL PRACTITIONER
Reduced waiting times and travel times	Can access patients quickly and easily without needing to visit in person
Fewer hospital transfers	
Easy for family and carers to participate	
Increased access to GPs, Allied Health Professionals and Specialists	
Can access patients quickly and easily without needing to visit in person	

COVID-19 Guidance for Residential Aged Care Facility staff ([Hunter New England HealthPathways](#); [Central Coast HealthPathways](#))

HEALTHDIRECT VIDEO CALL EDUCATION & TRAINING

RESOURCES

- About [healthdirect Video Call](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- Introduction to [healthdirect Video Call](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- [Step-by-step Video Call guide](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- [Browser information](#) (*healthdirect* Australia)
- Register now for *healthdirect* Video Call - email telehealth@thephn.com.au

TRAINING

- Register to attend a live [healthdirect Video Call webinar](#)

WEBINARS

Mastermind: Quality patient care via telehealth

- [Livestream, slides and templates](#) (24/11/2020)

COVID-19 Update #15 - Telehealth (from 20:52)

- [Livestream video recording](#)

Quality Improvement Community of Practice #4 - Telehealth

- [Livestream video recording](#)
- [PowerPoint slide presentation \(IT & Privacy\)](#)
- [PowerPoint slide presentation \(Quality Improvement\)](#)

Adapting to Telehealth for Allied Health & Commissioned Services

- [Livestream recording](#)
- [PowerPoint slide presentation](#)

Mastermind: Overview & Guide to Telehealth in General Practice

- [Livestream recording](#)
- [PowerPoint slide presentation](#)

**PRIMARY
HEALTH
NETWORK**

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HUNTER NEW ENGLAND
AND CENTRAL COAST

An Australian Government Initiative