

Virtual visit

Frequently asked questions

General information

What is a virtual visit?

A virtual visit is like a regular appointment with your health care provider (such as a doctor or nurse practitioner), but instead of going into a health care clinic or hospital you talk with your health care provider through a video call on your cell phone, tablet, laptop or computer.

Is a virtual visit right for me?

While some appointments with your health care provider need to be in-person, a virtual visit may be an option depending on your health care needs and preferences. It is best to reach out to your health care provider to determine if a virtual visit can be conducted for your next appointment.

How can I schedule a virtual visit?

If you and your health care provider decide that a virtual visit is right for you, you will get a confirmation email from your health care clinic. The email will confirm the appointment and have a Microsoft Teams link in it. The health care office will send the email before your scheduled appointment. provider before your scheduled appointment.

What technology is used to conduct a virtual visit?

PHSA now uses Microsoft Teams for most virtual health visits. Some visits may be conducted over Zoom, Teledoc or over the phone.

What if I need an interpreter or captioning for my virtual visit?

If you are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or communicate in a language other than English, you can ask for an interpreter or Communication Access in Real Time (CART) for your virtual visit. Please contact your health care provider before your appointment. They will help book the service you need.



Joining a virtual visit appointment

What device do I need for a virtual visit?

You can use a computer, tablet, or smartphone with a good internet connection. Your device should have a working camera, microphone, and speakers. For the best experience, it is strongly encouraged to join your virtual visit using a laptop or desktop computer.

Can I use a smartphone or tablet for my virtual visit?

Yes, you can use a smartphone or tablet to join your virtual visit. However, joining from some mobile devices may reduce your ability to use some in-call features and functions. For the best experience, it's recommended to use a laptop or desktop computer.

If you are using an interpreter or CART, it's best to use a laptop or desktop computer.

Do I need to download Microsoft Teams app?

If you are joining from a desktop computer or laptop, you can join a virtual visit from a web browser (Google or Microsoft Edge). However, it is strongly encouraged that patients download the Microsoft Teams app for the best experience. If you join from a cell phone, you will be required to download the Microsoft Teams app.

Do I need to bring anything to my virtual visit?

You will need your Personal Health Number (PHN). Look on your driver's license, CareCard, or BC Services Card. It's also a good idea to bring a pen and paper in case you want to write something down. Write down any questions you have for your health care provider before your appointment.



Before the appointment (preparing for the virtual visit)

How will I receive the link to join the appointment?

Your health care provider or health clinic will send you a Microsoft Teams meeting link in an email that you can click to join your virtual visit.

What should I do if I don't receive the link?

Check your email junk/spam folder. If you still don't see it, contact your health care provider or health clinic to confirm and re-send the email invite.

Is there technical support available if I have trouble connecting?

Contact your health care provider or health clinic using the contact information provided in your invitation.

What should I do if I am running late?

Contact your health care provider's office to let them know.

How do I prepare for my virtual visit?

First, read our **virtual visit patient resource guide**. Then, before your virtual visit, make sure your device is fully charged and your internet connection is working. Find a quiet and private place where you won't be interrupted by others during the meeting. When it's time for your appointment, click the meeting link that was sent to you by email. It's a good idea to join a few minutes early so you can enter your name and check that your sound and video are working properly.

Can I join a virtual visit if my video isn't working?

Yes, you can use the dial-in phone number found in your email. But, if you have an interpreter or CART booked, do not use the phone—these services will not work over a phone call.

During the appointment (about the visit itself)

What if the virtual visit is not meeting my needs?

You can stop a virtual visit at any time and request a phone call or an in-person visit.

Can I show my health care provider a physical ailment such as a rash or injury over video?

Yes. You can show your health care provider what's bothering you through the camera on your device. If your health care provider cannot properly assess the area by video, an in-person assessment may need to be scheduled.

Can a family member or caregiver join the virtual visit with me?

Yes, they can join your virtual visit from their own device, please inform your health care provider or health care clinic in advance to send them a meeting invite. At the start of the virtual visit session, please introduce the person who is joining you. If the individual is physically with you but not on camera, let your health care provider know at the time of the virtual visit session.

Will my visit be private and secure?

Yes. The virtual visit technology being used follows to privacy rules and regulations. If you are joining a group session, be aware that others can view you and your background if your camera is turned on and messages placed in the chat can be viewed by everyone in the meeting.

What should I do if my health care provider disconnected?

If your health care provider disconnects from the meeting by mistake, you might also be removed from the meeting. Please click the meeting link in your email to re-join the meeting and wait in the virtual lobby until you are let in to the main room by your health care provider. You may contact your health care provider's office or clinic if they do not return to the meeting.

What should I do if I get disconnected during the visit?

If you lose connection or leave the meeting by accident, you can click the meeting link in your email to join the meeting again. If you are not able to reconnect, the health care provider may contact you using the contact information you gave them. If you don't hear from them, please contact the health care provider or clinic by phone or email.

Can I send a private message to my health care provider during a group session?

Not at this time.

Privacy and security

Is my personal health information safe during a virtual visit?

Yes, virtual visits are safe and private. Your video and personal information are protected and cannot be seen by anyone who shouldn't have access. Virtual visits follow all health privacy rules in Canada and B.C.

Are virtual visits recorded?

No, your virtual visit appointment will not be recorded.

How is my information protected?

Your virtual visit is private, just like an in-person visit. It follows B.C.'s privacy laws (FIPPA). Only your clinician can see or hear your information during a one-on-one virtual visit. During a group visit, all participants will be able to hear and see you (if your camera is on) and read information placed in the group chat. Because of this, it is important not to place confidential information into a chat during group virtual visit session.