

# Virtual Appointment Guide

Due to COVID-19, doctors are now meeting with patients 'virtually' and this can provide a better healthcare experience and achieve better outcomes. This new type of appointment is happening more often, so patients and doctors need to ensure that they're getting the most out of their meeting.

This guide to virtual appointments looks at preparing for the call, the call itself, and the outcomes. The guide is aimed to ensure patients are comfortable with their appointments and confident in their treatment pathway.

## Before your appointment

**Remember - this is your time, use the time, don't rush**

Prepare yourself	Prepare your space	Prepare your tools
Take some time to think about how/if your symptoms have changed since your last appointment.	Prepare a comfortable space away from distractions to take the call.	Prepare the tools, equipment and information you need for the phone call in advance of the call.
<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do I want to get out of this call?</li><li>• What do I need to tell the doctor about?</li><li>• Do you want a friend or family member present?</li><li>• Details of current medication and clinicians who prescribed them.</li></ul>	<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Privacy</li><li>• Comfort</li><li>• Confidence</li><li>• Lighting</li></ul>	<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Notes from last appointment</li><li>• Phone/laptop fully charged</li><li>• Headphones working (if applicable)</li><li>• Pen and paper to hand</li><li>• If it's a video call, make sure the camera is a suitable height.</li></ul>
<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Go through our Symptoms Tracker and note how each symptom is now.</p>	<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Create a comfortable space for the call but wait for the call away from it. Be ready to take the call 15 minutes before or after the agreed time.</p>	<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Rehearse your call in the days leading up to the appointment with a friend or loved one.</p>

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# On the call

Remember - be comfortable, speak clearly and ask questions

Your symptoms	Yourself	Your pathway
Discuss how your symptoms have changed since you last spoke to your clinician. Write down any questions you have regarding them.	Discuss how you feel physically and mentally.	Discuss where you are on your treatment pathway.
<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about if you've modified any behaviours.</li><li>• How, when and where are you sleeping?</li><li>• If you are breathless, when does this happen and at what exertion?</li><li>• Are any regular activities becoming harder?</li><li>• Are your symptoms affecting your sexual activity?</li></ul>	<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes in heart rate or blood pressure since last appointment.</li><li>• Changes in your weight</li><li>• Changes in your eating habits</li><li>• Changes in your behaviour pattern</li><li>• If you feel anxious, when does this happen and about what?</li></ul>	<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How severe is your condition?</li><li>• When should you be discussing treatment options?</li><li>• When are you likely to need treatment?</li><li>• What rehab should you be considering?</li></ul>
<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Be open, be honest and think critically.</p>	<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Talk about your health with someone you're close to. Sometimes you don't notice subtle changes.</p>	<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Write down exactly where you are on your treatment plan and why, so you have a record of it.</p>

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# How to end the call

Remember - this is your time, make the most of it

You're confident	You know what's next	You know who to contact
Make sure you are completely clear about your treatment plan.	Make sure you know when your next appointment is and what it is in regards for.	Who do you contact if something changes? And how?
<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repeat back to the clinician what you have learned during this session.</li><li>• Tell them what you're going to do over the coming weeks/ months.</li><li>• Ask questions if you're unclear.</li></ul>	<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When is your next appointment?</li><li>• Do you need any follow up care?</li><li>• Where and how will the appointment take place?</li></ul>	<b>Things to consider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who is your key contact?</li><li>• How are you monitoring changes?</li><li>• When can you contact them?</li></ul>
<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Give feedback. Let the team know what went right, what could be improved and if there are any ways the team can support your future digital consultations.</p>	<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Use our Symptom Tracker to monitor your symptoms. If you notice any deteriorations, report them to your primary contact immediately.</p>	<b>Top Tip</b> <p>Call your primary contact and introduce yourself. Save their number on your phone, a loved one's phone, and write it down and keep it somewhere safe and easy to find.</p>

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## Remember

This is a new type of consultation, so it will take a little time to get comfortable with the process.

If you are not comfortable using technology or you find that it's difficult to communicate naturally with your care team, ask a trusted relative or friend to help you troubleshoot any technical issues, or to sit in on future appointments to smooth over any communication issues.

While it may seem scary at first, this new type of appointment could provide more convenient access to your medical care team when you need it most.