

Telehealth Toolkit for COVID-19

Telehealth toolkit

Indemnity - is telehealth covered under my policy?

Telehealth (healthcare services provided over the internet, video conference or phone) is covered under the Policy, provided both you and the patient are located in Australia and the practice is in accordance with the guidelines of the Medical Board, the relevant College and Medicare requirements.

You must notify us if you are undertaking 'instascript' or text based prescribing.

If you are undertaking any other telehealth services, such as where you and/or the patient are located overseas, and you wish to request an extension of cover for these services, please provide the following details in writing to peaceofmind@mdanational.com.au:

- country where you will be located
- country where the patient will be located
- an estimate of the period you or the patient will be outside of Australia
- whether you meet the registration requirements in the overseas jurisdiction you or the patient will be located
- the nature and scope of your practice
- how long will you be undertaking this telehealth practice
- whether there is an existing doctor-patient relationship

Please note: in all circumstances MDANI will not extend cover for proceedings arising outside of Australian jurisdiction, in relation to the provision of healthcare services via telehealth.

Telehealth toolkit

Planning a video-based telehealth service - what **set up** do I need?

- **Equipment** - dual screens, webcam, headset, internet provider
- **Environment** – private, quiet, neutral background, well lit
- **Video conference software**

Seek advice on the most appropriate platform for your needs from your practice's IT provider, your local Primary Health Network, the [RACGP](#), ACRRM and the [Centre for Online Health](#).

The RACGP supports the use of free apps, such as Skype, if doing telehealth on an ad hoc basis but for an ongoing telehealth service a professional platform will provide greater quality and sustainability.

Considerations for purchasing a platform include - privacy and security, availability of technical help and support, broadband speed, waiting room functionality, browser compatibility, useability, cost and billing support.

Billing and Medicare

The rules around billing have changed a number of times during the COVID-19 pandemic, so it is important for doctors and practice staff to be up to date with current guidelines.

The links below provide information for billing of telehealth and COVID-19 vaccinations:

- MBS Telehealth Services <http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Factsheet-telehealth-1July22>
- Services Australia – MBS changes <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/changes-to-mbs-items-during-coronavirus-covid-19-response?context=20>

Telehealth toolkit

What should I do differently compared to a face-to-face consultation?

Conducting a telehealth consultation

- Test your audio and video is working
- Have your patient's phone number at hand
- Speak slightly slower than you would in normal conversation
- Pause after speaking – take care not to talk over the top of your patient
- Avoid excessive movement
- Inform your patient if you need to look away from the screen e.g. to look at medical records
- Ask if your patient can see hear and see you
- Check the patient's identity – ask the patient to provide their name, address and DOB
- If there is anyone else in the room, ask them to move into camera view or leave the room
- Inform your patient you will phone them if there are any technical difficulties and confirm the phone number is correct
- Prepare your patient before you begin the consultation – if necessary, ask the patient to adjust their camera, re-position themselves or the person accompanying them, turn on the light, or close the curtains behind them
- Obtain verbal or written consent for the telehealth consultation - outline the reasons and benefits, the process, not the same as face-to-face, limited examination, the possibility of technical problems, reasonable steps will be taken to protect privacy but cannot be guaranteed, the costs of the consultation and assignment of Medicare benefit (if relevant)
- Documentation – include in the medical records the same level of detail as a face-to-face consultation with an additional record that is it a video or phone consultation, location of the patient and patient's consent. Consider also documenting the rationale for telehealth consultation vs physical consultation, responsibility for any follow-up actions, the presence of other parties and the patient's consent for their involvement, any technical problems which may have compromised the safety and quality of the consultation
- Information about electronic prescribing can be found [here](#).

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Key risk management strategies

- Not all consultations can be conducted safely by telehealth and so ensure you have a plan if a face-to-face consultation is required– some patients or types of consultations and presentations will not be amenable to telehealth e.g. when a physical examination is critical for diagnosis or treatment
- Keep good medical records

Resources

- **Medical Board of Australia**
 - [Telehealth guidance for practitioners](#)
 - [Guidelines for technology-based patient consultations](#)
 - [Inter-jurisdictional technology-based patient consultations](#)
- **RACGP**
 - [Guide to providing telephone and video consultations in general practice](#)
 - [Telehealth video consultations guide](#)
 - [mHealth in general practice](#)
- **ACCRM**
 - [Telehealth guidelines](#)
- **RANZCP**
 - [Professional Practice Standards and Guides for Telepsychiatry](#)
- **RACP**
 - [Telehealth guidelines and practical tips](#)
- **AMA**
 - [Position Statement: technology-based patient consultations](#)
- **University of Queensland Centre for Online Health**
 - [Quick guides for telehealth](#)
- **MDA National – New telehealth related FAQs**
 - <https://www.mdanational.com.au/mda-national-coronavirus-advice>
- [Privacy checklist for telehealth services](#)