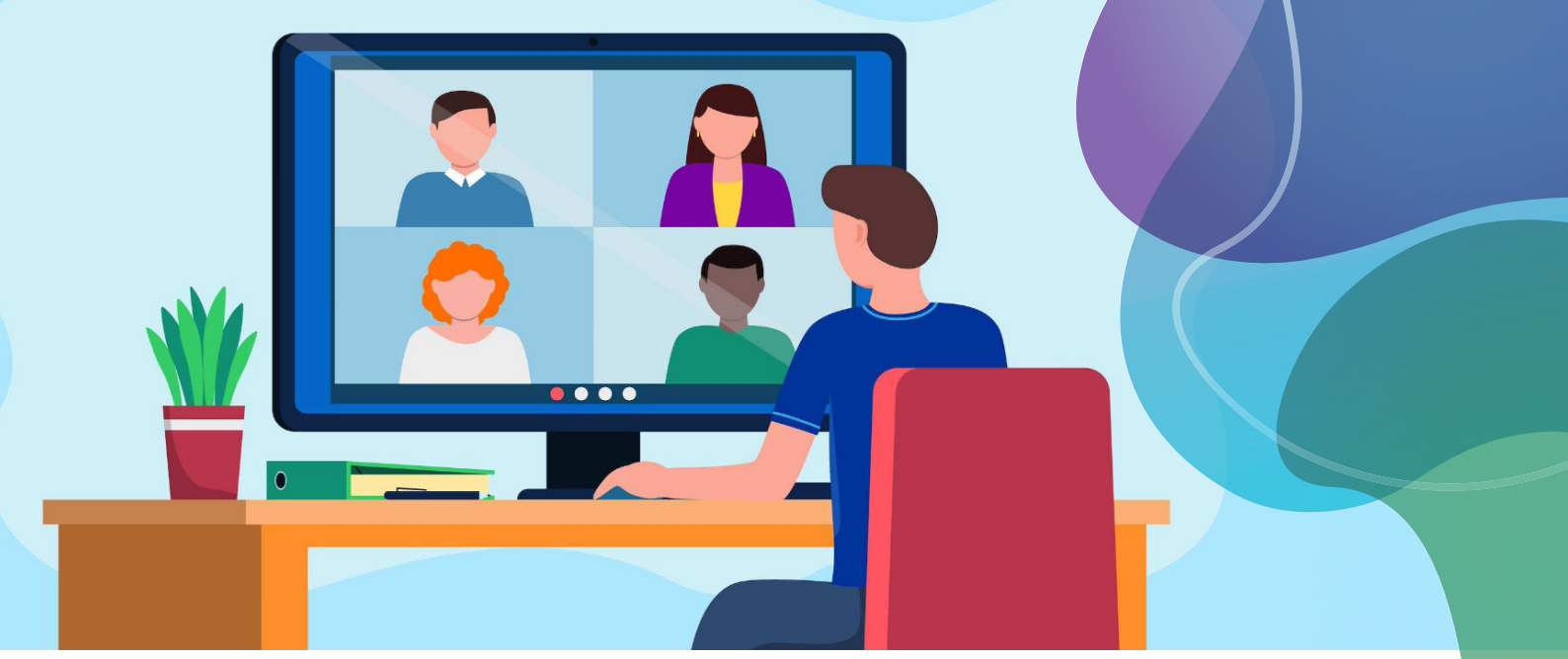


Getting the most out of your telehealth appointments

Tips for people living with upper gastrointestinal (GI) cancer, which includes cancer of the pancreas, liver, stomach, bile duct and oesophagus

This fact sheet is a general guide to getting the most out of a telehealth appointment with your doctor or healthcare team. Each service may have its own process, so check with your provider about how they run their telehealth appointments.

Telehealth is a virtual care session by telephone or video call that lets you speak with your doctor or healthcare team without leaving your home.

For many people living with cancer, this is a real relief. It saves travel time and cost, reduces exposure to illness, and means you can have important conversations from a place where you feel comfortable.

Telehealth is commonly used for:

- ✓ follow-up appointments
- ✓ discussing test results
- ✓ managing symptoms and side effects
- ✓ nutrition advice
- ✓ counselling.



Telehealth is NOT suitable when a physical examination or hands-on test is required. In those cases, your doctor will arrange a face-to-face visit.

What you'll need for a telehealth appointment

Telehealth phone call

- A landline or mobile phone

Telehealth video call

- A smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer with camera and microphone
- A stable internet connection
- Your email address or mobile number (for the video link)

Need extra support?

If you are hard of hearing, or need an interpreter, let your doctor or treatment team know when you book. They can arrange some extra support in advance.

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Getting ready for your appointment

Prepare your questions

Write down anything you want to discuss, like symptoms, side effects, medicines and next steps. Don't rely on memory.

Check your instructions

Make sure you have received the link or call-in details, and that you know how to join. Test any new software or app beforehand if you can.

Find a quiet and suitable spot

Choose somewhere you won't be interrupted and where you feel comfortable speaking openly. Rest your phone, tablet or laptop somewhere stable so you don't have to hold it throughout the call.

Have your details handy

Keep your Medicare card, a list of current medicines and your pharmacy's contact details nearby.

Join a few minutes early

Log on or be ready to receive the call a few minutes before your scheduled time so you can check everything is working.

Check your camera and sound

If you're having a video call, make sure your camera is on, your microphone is unmuted, and your face and shoulders are clearly visible. Avoid bright light behind you (e.g. sitting in front of a window), this can make it hard for the doctor to see you.

What does it cost?

Some telehealth appointments may be bulk-billed (free). You should ask about any costs and how to pay **before** your appointment.



During your appointment

Look at the screen directly and speak clearly

There is no need to raise your voice. Speak when your doctor has finished, to avoid talking over each other.

Bring a support person

A family member or carer is welcome to join your telehealth appointment. Just introduce them to your doctor at the start of the call.

Take notes

Write down any instructions or next steps that your doctor tells you. Ask them to repeat or clarify anything you are unsure about.

Ask to see your results

If your doctor is reviewing scan or test results, ask them to share their screen so you can see what they are talking about.

Don't panic if you get cut off

Your doctor or their team will call you back.

Confirm your next steps before you finish

Before ending the call, make sure you know what happens next – any follow-up appointments, actions you need to take or prescriptions being sent.

Where to find further information

If you have questions about telehealth, speak to your doctor or treatment team or ask them about the platform and process they use.

Information provided by Pancare Foundation is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, treatment or other healthcare services. Pancare Foundation may provide information to you about physicians, products, services, clinical trials or treatments related to upper gastrointestinal cancer, but Pancare Foundation does not recommend nor endorse any healthcare resource if not specified.

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