

Detailed Information For Patients Considering or Involved in Virtual Care During the COVID-19 Outbreak.

COVID-19 is placing stress on Canada's public health system. Our office is starting to offer 'virtual care' to make sure that we can continue to care for our patients safely and effectively. This means that we will be using video and telephone services instead of asking patients to come into our office. Some of these technologies, such as OTN (Ontario Telemedicine Network) are provided by the Province. Others have been provided by vendors like Google, or Apple to help make discussions with your care provider as easy as possible during these difficult times. Some health concerns can be addressed with virtual care alone, but in some cases your doctor may ask you to visit a hospital or other health care facility if necessary, for an in-person assessment. We do our best to make sure that any information you give us during virtual care visits is private and secure, but no video or audio tools are ever completely secure. There is an increased security risk that your health information may be intercepted or disclosed to third parties when using video or audio communications tools. To help us keep your information safe and secure, you can:

- Understand that this method of communication is not secure in the same way as a private in-person appointment.
- Use a private computer/device (ie. not an employer's or third party's computer/device and a secure internet connection. For example, using a personal computer or tablet is more secure than at a library, and your access to the Internet on your home network will generally be more secure than an open guest Wi-Fi connection.

You should also understand that virtual care is not a substitute for in-person communication or assessments, where appropriate, or for attending the Emergency Department when needed (including for any urgent care that may be required).

If you are concerned about using video or audio tools for virtual care, you can ask our office to arrange for you to visit a different healthcare provider or other health care centre where you can be seen in person. However, please note that visiting a health care provider in person comes with a higher risk of coming into contact with COVID-19 and the possibility of spreading the virus.

By providing your information, you agree to let us collect, use, or disclose your personal health information through video or audio communications (while following applicable privacy laws) in order to provide you with care. In particular, the following means of electronic communication may be used: phone, Facetime, Skype.