

Virtual Visits Frequently Asked Questions

Information for essential care providers

Did you know you can ask your healthcare provider for a virtual visit instead of an in-person appointment? A virtual visit is just like a regular appointment except you speak with a care provider over video without having to leave your home.

When to ask for a virtual visit?

While not every appointment can be done virtually, there are number of situations where a virtual visit could be beneficial including:

- Visits where the goal is to gather information during a conversation
- Follow up visits
- Appointments with healthcare providers located far from your home

How does a virtual visit work?

Every healthcare provider may have a different process when booking a virtual visit. Often times a healthcare provider will send you an invitation over email with a date and time for the virtual visit. The email should also include a link you click to join the virtual visit. For more information and directions on how to join a virtual visit, contact your healthcare provider.

What do you need for a virtual visit?

- An email address and access to the internet
- A computer, cellphone or tablet equipped with a camera, speakers and microphone

Please note your healthcare provider may have additional requirements to accommodate a virtual visit.

What are the benefits of a virtual visit?

Travelling to in-person appointments, especially when out of town can be stressful. A virtual visit reduces stress, saves time and money.

Is a virtual visit private?

Just like an in-person healthcare appointment, a virtual visit is private, confidential and is not recorded. Only those participating in the virtual visit will be able to see and hear information.

Are there any virtual visit challenges for people living with dementia?

Visual information is the most powerful sensory input for people living with dementia. However, many dementias affect how a person processes visual information so it could impact their ability to participate in a virtual visit including:

- A person living with dementia may be able to see and be curious about things right in front them, but it may take them longer to process the visual information and adjust to a virtual visit
- If a person living with dementia is having difficulty during a virtual visit don't get discouraged, instead explain to the healthcare provider why they are struggling

How do I prepare for a virtual visit?

- Ensure your healthcare provider has provided your virtual visit details including date and time of appointment, and how to connect to your virtual visit
- If needed, ask your healthcare provider if they can walk you through how to set up virtual visit
- If needed, ask your healthcare provider if they can schedule a test virtual visit to make sure it works properly
- Make sure you have your healthcare provider's name, title, phone number and email address available in case the virtual visit doesn't connect
- Check your computer, cellphone or tablet's speakers, microphone, and headphones (if you're using them)
- Prepare questions ahead of time for your virtual visit
- Make sure the person living with dementia has had something to eat, drink and has used the bathroom
- Sit in a comfortable chair/couch
- Have a piece of paper and pen nearby to take notes
- If possible, designate a family member or friend to act as an assistant during the virtual visit

What should I keep in mind during a virtual visit?

- Make sure you're speaking clearly and loud enough so your healthcare provider can hear you
- Take notes and write down any instructions
- Ask questions from your pre-prepared list
- If you can't understand the healthcare provider, ask them to speak slower, clearer and louder, or ask them to repeat what they just said
- Ask your healthcare provider to sit at a 45 degree angle to the camera
- If the person living with dementia is tired or needs to move around, ask your assistant (designated family member or friend) for help, so you can continue with the virtual visit
- Ask your healthcare provider what the best way is to reach them (e.g. phone or email) in case you have any follow up questions after your virtual visit

What should I do after my virtual visit?

- Follow up with your healthcare provider with any additional questions you may have
- If recommended, book any follow up appointments or tests outlined by your healthcare provider
- If recommended, book your next virtual visit

The information included in this handout was created by the South Eastern Ontario Lived Experience Network, a partnership between Providence Care and the Alzheimer Society Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, to help advocate for more virtual visits for people living with dementia.

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