

## Fact Sheet

### Patient Information

#### **What is telehealth?**

Telehealth consultations are conducted over the internet using video conferencing software, and allow you to see and hear your specialist in real time. This consultation could be conducted in your home, or with the support of your General Practitioner (GP) or health worker.

#### **Why should I participate in a telehealth consultation?**

Telehealth can be more convenient, especially when you live a great distance from your nearest specialist or have difficulty travelling. Speaking with your specialist via videoconference can replace many types of consultations, especially if you need to see your specialist regularly.

#### **What is involved in a telehealth consultation?**

Telehealth consultations are conducted in a similar way to face to face consultations: the main difference being that the conversation with the specialist is being conducted via videoconference. Test results and scans can be discussed and if required your health professional can perform a physical examination and relay information to your specialist during the videoconference.

#### **Consent**

You (the patient) can decide whether you would like to participate in the videoconference and you should be fully informed about the consultation before you participate. You may like to ask your specialist or GP to clarify any aspects of the videoconference you are unsure about. You can also visit [www.racptelehealth.com.au](http://www.racptelehealth.com.au) for more information about telehealth.

#### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Telehealth consultations should be confidential and private, just like normal face to face consultations. You may like to discuss with your GP and specialist the measures that are in place to protect your privacy.

#### **Basic Telehealth**

During the video consultation you will speak to your specialist via a web cam and internet connection. Try to maintain eye contact with the camera and ensure there is enough light in the room so you can be seen clearly. Before you start the consultation, you may like to confirm with your specialist that they can see and hear you clearly. Your specialist will send you information about the videoconferencing software they use and you may need to download and install some additional software.

### **Telehealth with your GP, or other health worker**

Attend your GP's office as you normally would for a face to face consultation. While there, your GP will connect via videoconference with your specialist. Your GP, or a practice nurse or other health worker, may conduct a physical examination and relay their findings to the specialist via videoconference. The specialist will be able to make an assessment of your condition based on the information provided to them by the health workers in the room with you.

### **Telehealth at home**

If you do not need any support during the consultation, it may be more convenient to consult with your specialist from your home. For example, you might not need your GP to be present if you are discussing test results with your specialist. Seeing your specialist via telehealth in your home may allow you to see your specialist more frequently and save on travel time and costs.

While participating in the videoconference you should make sure you are located in a quiet area that is free from disruptions. You may like to have a family member or friend with you during the videoconference if it makes you feel more comfortable. You should always inform your specialist if someone else is in the room with you. Also, ensure you have access to any test results or health information that you may like to discuss with your specialist.

### **How will you be billed?**

If you are participating in the telehealth consultation from your GP's office, Aboriginal Medical Service or residential aged care facility, you will be asked to sign the relevant Medicare forms or pay in person.

If you are participating in a telehealth consultation from home, the method of payment will depend on your specialist and whether they bulk bill. If your specialist bulk bills, they will lodge the claim for the telehealth consultation with Medicare and you will have no out of pocket expenses. Your specialist will need to ask for your consent to bulk bill via email, in lieu of signing a form in person.

If your specialist does not bulk bill, they may ask you to provide credit card details and send you information on how to claim a Medicare rebate.

Speak to your GP or specialist to confirm billing arrangements.

**For more information please speak to your specialist.**