

Frequently Asked Questions about Virtual Care

What can you expect if you have been scheduled for a telephone or video visit with your Health Care Provider (HCP) at Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH)?

Markham Stouffville Hospital offers virtual visits to provide high quality, safe care to our patients and families outside of the hospital environment. Virtual care reduces travel time and other costs associated with on-site visits for patients, while maintaining access to care.

What is a virtual visit?

A virtual visit is an appointment with your doctor or HCP that does not involve an in-person meeting. In lieu of coming to the hospital, you are able to speak with your health care team using a regular telephone, smartphone or your computer (for video-visits).

Why is Markham Stouffville Hospital offering virtual visits?

We are using virtual visits more often at MSH to reduce how many people come to the hospital. This is to protect our patients, staff and the community. Virtual visits are not new. MSH and health care teams across Ontario have been using virtual visits for some time through the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN). However, we are offering virtual visits in more clinics now and using a new platform called Zoom Healthcare. We are doing this so that we can make sure patients have access to care during this time, without exposing patients or staff to unnecessary risk.

Is my consent required prior to attending a virtual visit?

Yes, your consent is required prior to attending a virtual visit. Your health care provider will contact you to schedule your appointment. At that time, they will ask you for your information including your email address, your name, date of birth and Health Card Number. Your HCP will also discuss the option of attending your appointment virtually or to be seen in person.

You will be informed about the risks and benefits of a virtual visit. If you consent to meet with your HCP virtually, you will receive an email to confirm your appointment. The email will also contain the Zoom link required to join the virtual visit. If you have any questions about your virtual visit, please contact the clinic or your healthcare provider directly.

What equipment do I need to participate in a virtual visit?

You will need:

- a personal device (computer, tablet, cellphone) with a web camera and microphone
- high speed internet;
- an email address (for video-conferencing);
- private space;
- a pen and paper to write down any questions or instructions from your health care team.



If you don't have access to these things, your health care team will do everything that they can to make other arrangements for you to access care appropriate to your needs

How will my virtual visit be booked?

Your health care team may call you to discuss changing your upcoming appointment to a virtual visit.

- They will talk to you about options for virtual care. This may include offering a regular telephone call, a video call using a system called Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), Zoom Healthcare, or Meditech Virtual Visit (depending on your provider).
- They will give you instructions on how to prepare.
- They will also ask for your consent for the upcoming appointment.
- They will let you know the day and time of your virtual visit and confirm they have your preferred contact information. The decision on which type of virtual visit you have will be made based on your care needs and the technology you and the clinic have access to.

Video conferencing tools approved at MSH

MSH uses the following secure video conferencing tools:

- Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN); and,
- Zoom Healthcare
- Meditech Virtual Visits

Is Video Conferencing Safe and Private?

There is some risk with any virtual care solution our privacy and information security teams have reviewed these platforms and are taking appropriate precautions to make sure your information is safe and secure as possible.

Privacy and Email Communication

- Your health care team will ask you for consent to communicate using email when scheduling your virtual appointment or during the virtual appointment. We will require your consent to use your email address to communicate with you directly about your healthcare appointments.
- Your consent to email communication will be documented in your health record.
- We suggest that you use your personal email when communicating about your health and not a work email address, as your employer may have the right to inspect your work email.
- MSH may also send you appointment information and other general information by email if you have consented to receive information in this way.
- Please do not send emails for urgent symptoms, questions or in an emergency. If you have an urgent medical issue, please call 911 or visit an Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre.
- Some care areas may send you a follow-up survey after your appointment by email. This will help us improve the quality of our care. They should let you know about this during your appointment, so check with them that they have your preferred contact details.

- If you receive a link to a survey and are not sure if it is coming from your care team, please call them to check before clicking on any link.

What can I do to prepare for my virtual visit?

- Make sure that your technology is set up properly
- Find a quiet and private space where you can easily hear and be heard (ie. Using headphones)
- Decide if you would like a family member or caregiver to be with you during the visit
- If you are part of a group session, it is important to be mindful of the privacy of other group members. Try to find a private spot in your home where other members of your family cannot see/hear the session. Use headphones, if you can, and avoid having other distractions (television, music, etc.) on in the background.
- Have all your materials ready prior to the meeting including:
 - Health Card
 - Pen and paper to write down information and instructions
 - List of medications being taken (if applicable)
 - Notes of medical history, symptoms
 - Questions you would like to ask

Can I decline a virtual visit or change my mind?

Yes, you can decline or withdraw your consent for virtual visits or communication using email or text, at any time by contacting your HCP. Please know that this may lead to delays in your care during this challenging time, as only urgent in person appointments are being offered in our clinics right now.

Where can I provide feedback about my virtual visits?

You can contact MSH's Patient Relations department by email patientrelations@msh.on.ca or by phone at 905-472-7141.

