Telehealth: What to expect at your appointment

What is telehealth?
Telehealth is the use of videoconferencing for appointments with your doctor when they are at a different location. You may have seen videoconferencing used on television when the host is interviewing a guest overseas, who appears on a television screen.

Why have I been booked into telehealth?
Telehealth can be very convenient when:

- You need access to a specialist that isn’t in your local area
- There is a shorter waiting period for a telehealth appointment than face-to-face
- It is difficult for you to travel
- You would like to have a local health professional or family member with you at your specialist appointment.

Your local health professional and specialist will only recommend telehealth when they consider it to be safe and appropriate for you.

What happens at a telehealth appointment?
At the telehealth appointment, you (and your support person) will meet with a doctor at a distant location via a video link. You will see the doctor on the television screen and will be able to talk to them as you would in a face-to-face consultation. Your local health professional may accompany you so that they can also hear what the specialist says, and to offer you support throughout the consultation. You can also choose not to have them present at the appointment, if you prefer.

Is my telehealth consultation private and confidential?
Yes. The image and sound is transferred in an encrypted form so that your medical consultation is completely confidential.

How much does it cost?
Telehealth is often covered by medicare. If there are additional costs involved, these will be discussed with you by your referring health professional.
What if I need to be examined?
If needed, the specialist may ask your local health professional to examine you on their behalf, and would discuss this with you. This may or may not be on camera, and at all times your privacy will be respected.

How can I get the most out of my appointment?
- Before the appointment, make a list of questions that you have for your specialist that relate to your care, and bring them with you.
- On the day of your appointment, try to wear a neutral coloured top. Stripes, spots, and bold colours do not show up well on camera.
- If you have a child with you, bring quiet toys that will them entertained during the consultation.
- Try to arrive 15 minutes before your appointment
- Switch off your mobile phone.
- You will be able to speak naturally to your specialist, but try not to interrupt other people. The microphone can only pick up one person at a time.
- If you have any questions during the consultation, please feel free to ask.

Can I choose not to be seen by telehealth?
Of course! If you are not comfortable talking to your specialist by telehealth, feel free to discuss this with the local health professional that has referred you. They will be able to advise you of the availability of face-to-face appointments with the specialist, however, this may involve travelling to the specialist’s clinic.

What if I need to cancel my appointment?
Planning a telehealth clinic involves a lot of coordination. If you are unable to attend, please phone the clinic coordinator on the number listed below, as soon as possible.

Important numbers:
Clinic coordinator: ________________________
Local health professional: __________________________
Specialist: ______________________________________