

Virtual Visits with Your Kidney Care Team During COVID-19

What to Expect and How to Prepare

Your kidney care team may book virtual visits with you during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual visits are a safe way to get the care you need when and where you need it.

What is a Virtual Visit?

During a virtual visit you will speak to your kidney care team from home.

Virtual visits are different from in-person visits. You will not go to the hospital or clinic for your appointment. Preparing for your visit can help make this change easier.

You can use your home telephone, cell phone, computer, or tablet for the appointment, whatever works best for you.

You will be scheduled to speak to people from your kidney care team (including the nephrologist and a nurse), as needed.

How to Prepare and Schedule your Virtual Visit

- You may choose to have a family member or caregiver join your virtual visit.
- Confirm the date and time of your virtual visit with your kidney care team.
- Ask about your options. Confirm if your virtual visit is over the phone only or with video.
- Set time aside before and after your scheduled appointment in case your kidney care team is running ahead of schedule or is a bit behind.
- Write down questions you'd like to ask your kidney care team and have them with you when you have your virtual visit.

Before Your Virtual Visit

Tests and changes in your health

- If your kidney care team asks you to do any bloodwork or urine tests, please do them **several days before** your virtual visit. If you are not sure which tests to do before your virtual visit, or where you can do these tests, please contact your kidney care team.
- Your kidney care team may contact you a few days before your appointment to gather information. If there are changes to your health before your visit, be sure to let your kidney care team know. If your kidney care team feels that an in-person visit is needed, they will discuss options and next steps with you.

Need this information in an accessible format?

1-877-280-8538, TTY 1-800-855-0511, info@ontariohealth.ca

ORN4234



Ontario Health
Ontario Renal Network

Getting your device ready

Depending on the type of visit (phone or video visit), choose whether you will use your home phone, cell phone, computer, or tablet.

Tips for Visits Using Videos:

- For visits that include video, download any software needed for the visit. Test out the software **before** the scheduled visit.
- Make sure your device is connected to the internet.
- Make sure the device you are using is turned on and has a lot of battery before your scheduled visit. If the battery is low, make sure the device is plugged in.

Tips for Visits using a Cell Phone or Home Phone

- The call from your kidney care team may come from a private number or No Caller ID.

During Your Virtual Visit

- Try to find a private, quiet space. Turn off any background noise like the TV or radio.
- If there is background noise, mute your line when you are not speaking.

Talking to your kidney care team

- You may be asked to provide consent (permission) to have the virtual visit .
- Try to speak clearly and make sure your kidney care team can hear you.
- Ask any questions you have prepared for your kidney care team.

Getting the information you need

- Make sure you have enough medications until your next visit. If you need a renewal on your medications, ask your kidney care team.
- Your kidney care team may want to give you a handout or other helpful resources to read. Let them know if you would like to get it in the mail or by email.
- Ask what happens next: understand the next steps for your care. Ask if you will be getting a call or request for a virtual visit from another kidney care team member such as the nephrologist, nurse, pharmacist, dietitian, or social worker.

After Your Virtual Visit

- Read any information that your kidney care team gave you with your family or caregiver.
- Your doctor will tell your pharmacy about any new medications or changes to your current medications.
- Follow up with your pharmacy to pick up your prescriptions or have them delivered to you.
- Ask your pharmacist to explain how to take your medication.
- Contact your kidney care team if you have any questions or concerns about your medications.

Kidney Care Resources for Patients and Families

The following resources support people with chronic kidney disease, family members and caregivers. These resources can help you become more involved in your care decisions.

COVID-19 and Virtual Visits

(Kidney Foundation of Canada)

- How to Protect Yourself
kidney.ca/COVID-19-How-to-Protect-Yourself
- Video: We've got YOU covered for COVID
youtube.com/kidneypluggedin
- Tips For Your Virtual Appointment
kidney.ca/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=af13929a-f21d-430d-8d0a-b70296e80cd4

Managing your Kidney Disease

- ORN Symptom Management Resources (Anxiety/Depression, Insomnia, Itch, Pain, Restless Legs Syndrome)
ontariorenalnetwork.ca/en/kidney-care-resources/clinical-tools/symptom-management
- ORN Nutritional Guides
ontariorenalnetwork.ca/en/kidney-care-resources/clinical-tools/home-dialysis/nutrition-fact-sheets
- Kidney Foundation of Canada: Living with Kidney Failure
kidney.ca/Support/Resources/Living-With-Kidney-Failure

Purpose of this Patient Handout: This handout was created by the Ontario Renal Network, a division of Ontario Health, to help patients and their families/caregivers understand what to expect from a virtual visit with their kidney care team. Ontario Health is an agency of the government that shares best practices in care and provides funding for chronic kidney disease clinics across Ontario. The information in this handout is intended for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Always consult your kidney care team if you have questions or concerns.