

COVID-19 Information Updates

Temporary telehealth options following COVID-19 restrictions

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Over the months of March and April 2020, the Australian Government introduced measures to help reduce the risk of community transmission from COVID-19 and provide protection for patients and health care providers. One of these changes included the introduction of temporary Medicare benefits to help people access health services either by videoconference or over the phone.

The changed Medicare benefits mean that people can now request a telehealth consultation with a range of health care providers including GPs, specialists, allied health providers and nurse practitioners. Health care providers may also suggest a telehealth consultation rather than a face-to-face consultation.

Under legislation GPs are required to bulk bill for a telehealth consultation for people who are:

- Commonwealth concession care holders
- under 16 years of age
- or a vulnerable patient

Vulnerable patients include those who:

- are required to self-isolate or self-quarantine due to COVID-19
- are at least 70 years of age
- identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent - and are at least 50 years of age
- are being treated for chronic health conditions.

Specialists and allied health providers are not required to bulk bill and can set a fee for telehealth services.

We suggest you work with your health care providers to understand whether a telehealth appointment is available and clinically appropriate, and whether you are eligible to access bulk billed services.

The Department of Health [Consumer Factsheet](#)* on Telehealth provides more detail and answers to frequently asked questions.

* www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Factsheet-TempBB