

2020 Virtual healthcare checklist

Your guide to efficient and effective virtual healthcare sessions

Important

A heart attack, stroke or cardiac arrest is an emergency that requires immediate medical attention. **Call 9-1-1** if you or someone with you experiences **signs** of a heart attack, stroke or cardiac arrest.

There may be some situations where an in-person session is required to provide the care you need. Discuss your care with your healthcare provider.

Continue to follow public health measures to support physical distancing, as required.

For additional information:

Detailed virtual care information:
[2020 Virtual Healthcare Implementation Toolkit](#).

[Canadian Stroke Best Practices website](#) to manage your stroke.

Definition: What is virtual care?

Virtual care is a healthcare session between a healthcare provider and a person with a health issue, which takes place with each person in a different location, like a home or clinic. It uses technology to connect them – such as by phone or computer with or without video-conferencing.

Goal

This checklist provides you, your family and caregivers tips and steps to optimize your virtual sessions with a healthcare provider. People with lived experience of stroke, heart conditions and vascular cognitive impairment are experiencing an increase in virtual healthcare sessions. Use this checklist for an initial assessment, ongoing monitoring and rehabilitation therapy.

General tips: Preparing for a virtual healthcare session

- Ask your healthcare provider about your rights, privacy, and any confidentiality concerns.
- Consider your ability to participate in virtual healthcare sessions, such as physical abilities, technical abilities, communication challenges, language barriers, cognitive capacity.
- Ask your healthcare provider how much space you will need for your session.
- Plan your meeting space. Consider privacy and confidentiality, good lighting, minimal background noise and distractions (such as televisions, radio, pets). Ensure that the space is clear for you to safely move around for assessments and rehabilitation (e.g. remove tripping hazards such as loose rugs or cords).
- Have glasses, hearing aids, communication devices, or other accessibility devices with you.
- Have someone else available to participate in the session with you if possible (e.g., family member, caregiver, trusted friend), following safe physical distancing and public health measures (such as frequent handwashing).
- Gather information you will need for every session: health card, current medication list, pharmacy name, location and phone number, and health data such as recent blood pressure readings or glucose levels.
- Write down your list of concerns and questions, and have a pen and paper to make notes.
- Ask about reliable online resources and applications to help you manage your recovery and your daily activities.
- Have a plan in place for transport to an in-person appointment if it becomes necessary. Ask about clinic protocols for safe access to the care you need.

Getting connected: Technology tips for a virtual healthcare session

- At time of booking, ask which applications or programs your healthcare provider will use and download them before your session.
- Ask if there is someone that you can contact for technical support, if needed.
- Know how to connect with your healthcare provider to cancel or reschedule the session or if the internet goes down.
- Test your microphones, speakers and webcam ahead of time. Request a test call, if available, to be sure everything is working.
- Ensure that your phone or computer is charged and that you have access to a reliable internet connection throughout your session.
- Be aware of your camera range. The healthcare provider can only see what your camera sees.



Tips for a successful virtual ambulatory care session (such as stroke prevention or heart failure clinic)

Before the session:

- Identify others who need or want to participate (e.g., family members, family physician, nurse) and determine whether it is appropriate and technically possible.
- Ask your healthcare provider if any bloodwork, imaging, or testing is required before the session, when it needs to be completed and where to get it done. Ask how to get the test requisitions.
- Book your appointment for your test when possible to avoid waiting in a public area. Follow safety precautions, such as physical distancing and hand washing, when accessing testing services.
- Ask your healthcare provider if you need any items or equipment during the session like a blood pressure device. If planning a neurological exam, you may be asked to have a toothpick and ice cube ready.

During the session:

- Participate in the virtual session to the best of your ability.
- During the session let the healthcare provider know if you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, unwell, or have any concerns with how the session is going. You can request to terminate the session at any time.
- Ask questions to make sure you understand all information, instructions, and any changes to your medications that you are given. Don't be afraid to repeat back and test your understanding.
- Speak to changes in your mood, energy levels, feelings of fatigue, or sleep patterns with your healthcare provider.
- Note follow-up appointments, new referrals, and tests, where they will take place (virtual or in-person), and how they will be arranged.
- Request a follow-up session to receive education to help you manage on your own, if needed.

For additional information:

Heart & Stroke [Community of Survivors](#) and [Care Supporters Community](#) for online and peer support.

[Heart & Stroke website](#) for more information.



Tips for a successful virtual rehabilitation session

Before the session:

- Consider your ability to safely participate in a virtual rehabilitation session, such as physical abilities and cognitive capacity.
- Organize your space so you can safely participate in a rehabilitation session virtually.
- Ask what to expect during your session (e.g., assessments, what types of activities will you be doing, how much space you will need, length of the session).
- Ask what information and equipment you will need during your session, and where to obtain these items. Have these items ready.
- Have someone join you, such as a family member or caregiver. They can help with assessments and treatments, ensure safety, help support your affected limb for stroke rehabilitation, and take notes.
- Record details of your progress and changes (good and bad) in aspects of your recovery between sessions.

During the session:

It is important to let your healthcare provider know if you are feeling unwell, unsafe, or have new or worsening symptoms (such as shortness of breath, weakness, dizziness). Stop the activity right away, sit down, and discuss with them what you should do. You may be asked to visit the hospital or healthcare provider for further assessment and care.

- Wear comfortable clothes and non-slip footwear to walk or perform specific movements.
- Have a chair or table available for support during the session.
- Ask questions and concerns regarding your recovery, activities and therapies recommended for you, your daily routine or to monitor your progress. Don't be afraid to repeat back and test your understanding.
- Speak to changes in your mood, energy levels, feelings of fatigue, or sleep patterns with your healthcare provider.
- Note follow-up appointments, referrals, and tests, where they will take place (virtual or in-person), and how they will be arranged.
- Ask and record how to contact rehabilitation team members or community support teams as needed for your care.