



DOCTORS TECHNOLOGY OFFICE VIRTUAL CARE QUICK START GUIDE

Providing virtual care can be as simple as a **phone call** and also includes video visits, and secure messaging.

You can use tools that both you and your patients are already familiar with (refer to the [PHSA Office of Virtual Health COVID-19 Accessible Solution Toolkit](#) for suitable options). There are a variety of tools that are free or low cost that you might want to consider.

Doctors Technology Office (DTO) is here to support you. Please reach out if you have questions or would like support from a peer mentor.

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🌐 www.doctorsofbc.ca/doctors-technology-office

The Essentials To Getting Started With Virtual Care

Obtain patient **email addresses** and/or **mobile numbers**

Email addresses can be used for communicating new virtual care services to groups of patients, and depending on the virtual care tool can be used for sending the virtual visit link/URL to a patient.

Mobile numbers are useful for communicating with a patient if there are any issues with the virtual visit, or to ensure they are ready for their visit.

Ensure **privacy & security safeguards** are in place to protect patient confidentiality

At minimum, ensure that you provide patients with a notification of risks, validate their identity and confirm that your devices are secure before engaging in virtual care, as per the Provincial [Patient & Care Team Digital Communications Policy](#).

Virtual Care Tools

Common types of tools for consideration. For an overview of the different types of tools and questions to assist with selecting virtual care tools, please see the [Virtual Care Toolkit](#).

- Videoconferencing tools for provider to patient communication, and for group visits
- Secure email and secure text messaging tools
- Broadcasting tools to communicate with groups of patients, and cloud-based phone tools
- e-Faxing tools

Workflow

More information on patient suitability, schedule planning, booking visits, setting up the room, etiquette, documentation, follow-up and other best practices and suggestions can be found in the [Virtual Care Toolkit](#).

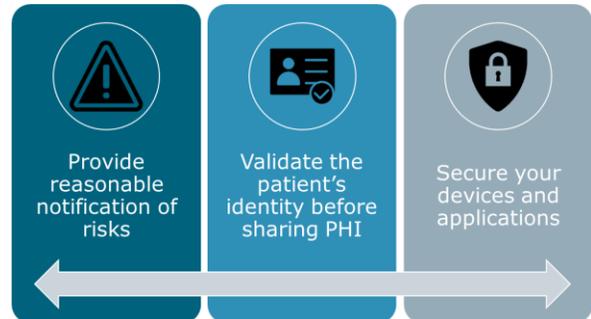
Billing Guide

For up-to-date billing codes, current changes and removal of any constraints, please see the [DoBC website](#).

Privacy and Security Safeguards

As stated in the [Patient & Care Team Digital Communications Policy](#), providers should make reasonable efforts to fulfill the minimum requirements prior to communicating electronically with patients or caregivers:

- Provide reasonable notification of risks (see [Appendix A](#))
- Validate the patient's identity before sharing personal health information (see [Appendix B](#))
- Secure your devices & applications (See [Appendix C](#))



During virtual care video visits, consider the following:

- Always **ensure the patient is ready** to have a confidential conversation.
- When appropriate, start video session with clear introductions and **confirm the patient's identity**.
- Conduct the video session in a **private space in both yours and the patient's location**. Check if the volume is set to an appropriate but discreet level or utilize headsets with a microphone to protect privacy.
- A patient may want to include a family member or caregiver during the video consult. If so, **be aware of who is in the room with the patient**. Follow the same principles as in-person visits to gauge patient's comfort.
- Once the session is over, all participants are expected to **disconnect from the call immediately**.

Obtaining Informed Consent

As a best practice, physicians who are providing health care via videoconferencing tools should obtain and document informed consent from patients in their EMR. Currently, Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) recommends using a signed [informed consent form \(Word doc or PDF version\)](#) or to obtain consent through a verbal conversation - ensuring that you explain the process and its benefits, address any patient concerns, and cover specific risks related to using electronic communication. Patient consent must always be voluntary, informed and unconditional. Before asking for consent, make patients aware of their right to withdraw the consent at any time. For more info, visit CMPA's [Using electronic communications, protecting privacy](#) article.

DTO Virtual Care Enablement Program

Supporting the implementation of virtual care across the province with:

- **Virtual Care Peer Support Network:** a network of Physician and MOA Peer Mentors to support their colleagues, and/or help facilitate webinars and learning sessions. Email peermentors@doctorsofbc.ca.
- **Virtual Care Learning Series:** a set of video tutorials and real-life physician and MOA case studies on how to optimize the use of common virtual care tools. Check out the [DTO YouTube Channel](#).

Virtual Care Toolkit

For a deeper dive on implementing Virtual Care in your practice, please refer to our [Virtual Care Toolkit](#).

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