

Your “Virtual Visit”

The Medication Assessment Centre Interprofessional Opioid Pain Service (MAC iOPS) is currently only seeing patients virtually to ensure that we can continue to provide safe and effective care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that we will be using video and audio technologies for your visits to keep you at home, rather than asking you to come into the Medication Assessment Centre.

We ask that you decide whether video or telephone consultations are most appropriate for your situation. The table on the next page highlights important differences regarding the benefits and potential drawbacks of each method of communication. If, after reviewing this information, you are concerned about using video or audio tools for virtual care, you can ask our program staff to attempt to arrange a potential alternative. This may require delaying your appointment until the pandemic situation improves and we are able to see you in person.

We may wish to send you communications and information by email as this allows us to connect with you in a timely manner. Please let us know if your email address changes at any time. If you are not comfortable or able to use email as a method of communication, we can send you information by paper mail.

We will not send you any information by email which contains your personal health information without first obtaining your consent. Personal health information is any information that can identify you and link you to healthcare services you receive.

Once your appointment time has been confirmed, you will receive an email or a phone call with information to access the video or phone call at the scheduled appointment time.

Privacy and Confidentiality

MAC iOPS knows that your personal health information is important to you and must be protected. We do our best to make sure that any information you give us during virtual care visits is kept private and secure, however there are no electronic communication tools (video, audio, telephone, email) that are completely secure.

There is an increased security risk that your health information may be intercepted or disclosed to third parties when using video, audio or email communications tools. Additionally, information may be vulnerable if stored on a computer/device that has been compromised by viruses or malware.

We will do what we can to confirm that any personal information we discuss is being received by you, and only you, but it is never possible to have 100% certainty about who we are communicating with outside of a face-to-face visit.

You are invited to express any concerns related to the provision of virtual care at any time. If you want more information, please ask us or review our website at www.usask.ca/pharmacist.

“Tips and Tricks for Accessing Virtual Care”

What are the different types of communication?



Video Visit (also known as videoconferencing):

involves a real-time audiovisual encounter between one or more health care providers and yourself using camera-equipped devices connected to the internet.

Benefits	Potential Drawbacks:
Allows family members and/or caregivers to easily be involved in the visit	Requires reliable internet, a device equipped with camera (Webcam), speaker, microphone, and possibly headphones
Allows for eye contact and communication using body language which may be more reassuring if you are feeling anxious	On mobile devices (smartphones and tablets), requires user to download a free app from the app store.
Can be most suitable for sensitive topics	Technical difficulties may arise suddenly
May help the pharmacist to develop a deeper understanding of your home environment, including how you manage medications	Others in the area of your location may overhear your conversation (can be avoided if you use headphones)
Ability to use instant message for those who are hard of hearing or hearing impaired	May require preparation of the environment (e.g., tidying a room, getting dressed, etc.)
Ability for pharmacist to share resources and videos on screen or demonstrate activities	



Telephone Visit (also known as audioconferencing):

involves a real-time audio encounter between a health care provider and yourself (may include others if on speaker-phone) using a mobile phone or landline.

Benefits	Potential Drawbacks:
Less prone to technical difficulty	No ability to see the pharmacist or show them objects in your home (e.g. pill bottles, medication list, range of motion of your limbs)
No special program or app required, easy to use	No ability for the pharmacist to show you any visual aids



Email Communication:

involves sending written messages and attachments electronically from one internet-enabled device to another.

Benefits	Potential Drawbacks:
Avoids postage cost and “phone tag”	Delays in communication. Response to your inquiries may take 2 or more business days
Faster transmission of information	Less secure, risk of third-party interception
Easier sharing of electronic information (links to videos, health promotion web sites) and no need to organize and store paper	Can be challenging to confirm the identity of the sender
	Potential for misunderstanding written communication

Tips for Getting Ready for Your Virtual Visit

1. If you decide to proceed with video visits:
 - Use a computer, tablet, or smartphone with a built-in camera and microphone that has a stable internet connection (may use Wi-Fi to avoid data charges)
 - Test your audio and video connection prior to your appointment, and adjust the settings so you can see and hear well (or get someone to do this for you)
 - If all goes well, the call will feel like a face to face appointment
2. During your visit:
 - Ensure you are physically comfortable in a well-lit, quiet, and private place where you won't be disturbed during the session
 - Just before your appointment time, click on the provided link or call the number that was provided to you
 - If using a camera, look at the screen (there is no need to look directly at the camera)
 - Say hello or wave when you see or hear the pharmacist (you may both have make a few small adjustments to get the sound and/or video working well)
 - Make sure the MAC iOPS program has your phone number. If you get cut off and can't reconnect, wait for a phone call:
 - **📞 The pharmacist will call you if the video connection fails**
 - Have a note pad and pen available so you can write down any advice, instruction, or notes to remind yourself of key points from the appointment
 - After you have both said goodbye at the end of the visit, disconnect or hang up

Steps you can take to help us keep your information safe and secure:

- Use a private computer/device (i.e., not an employer's or third party's computer/device), password-protect your device and accounts, and use a secure internet connection
 - For example, if you have the ability to use a personal and encrypted email account, this is more secure than using an unencrypted email account
 - Your access to the internet on your home network will generally be more secure than an open guest Wi-Fi connection
 - You are responsible for the security of your own computer/tablet, email service, and telephone
- Be aware that we cannot control what happens to information once it is stored:
1) on your device; 2) by telecommunications providers; 3) by software or application providers; or 4) by other applications that may have access to your messages
- Protect your passwords. Someone could pose as you by sending us a request from your device or email account
- Delete emails you no longer require
- Use your device settings to control what information your applications (Apps) have permission to access
- Use virus protection on your computer or device, and perform scans regularly