

## Virtual Care vs In-Person Care Booking Guidance

The help you determine what type of appointment is best to support your care needs, see some examples of what should be booked in person, what can be booked virtually, and when you should seek emergency care.

### What types of health concerns should be booked for an in-person appointment?

While virtual appointments can be more accessible for you, many health concerns should be seen in person. These include health concerns where your doctor or nurse practitioner would need to see or touch in order to make a diagnosis or provide treatment.

Examples of health concerns that should be booked for an **in-person appointment** include:

- Stomach pain
- New chest pain (if not an emergency)
- New or worsening shortness of breath (if not an emergency)
- Breast issue
- Genital or Anorectal Issues
- Eye issues - e.g., pink eye, styes (go to nearest emergency department if having sudden vision changes)
- Ear issues
- Rash or skin concerns, including insect bites
- Sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, if symptoms or if swabs needed
- New headaches (if not an emergency)
- Immunization administration
- Prenatal and well-baby visits
- Pap tests

In addition to this list of health concerns, if you have chronic health conditions (i.e. diabetes, high blood pressure) and have not been seen in person for more than 6 months, we recommend booking an in-person appointment.

### What types of health concerns can be booked for a virtual (phone) appointment?

Some health concerns can be safely assessed and managed as a virtual visit (phone appointment).

Examples of health concerns that can be booked for as **virtual appointment** include:

- Allergy symptoms - Nose/Eyes
- Blood test requests for known chronic diseases that are stable and for which you have had an in-person visit within the past 6 months (e.g., heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease, asthma, diabetes, high

blood pressure, obesity)

- Contraception renewal as long as you have had a blood pressure checked in the last 6 months
- Cold or flu symptoms you are concerned about
- Fatigue
- Form/Document completion requests
- Lice
- Mental health issues (e.g., mood changes, anxiety)
- Prescription renewals (in most circumstances; please note that renewals for controlled substances such as stimulants, opioids, and benzodiazepines may require an in-person appointment)
- Referral requests for physiotherapy, massage, chiropractic, or other allied health discipline
- Some sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, if no symptoms or swabs needed.
- Smoking cessation or substance use questions (e.g., alcohol, cannabis, other drugs)
- Test result review
- Urinary symptoms
- Vaccine questions or forms

If after the virtual visit your provider has any additional questions or needs to see you in person, they will ask you to book an in-person visit after your conversation. If you are not sure whether you need to see your provider in-person, we would recommend you schedule an in person appointment.

### **When should you visit the emergency room?**

There are also situations in which your symptoms may be potentially dangerous or life threatening. If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

- Severe chest pain
- Severe shortness of breath
- Sudden severe headache
- Continuous vomiting and inability to drink any fluids
- Serious trauma or injuries (i.e., bleeding that will not stop, deep cuts, broken bones)
- Sudden loss of vision
- Sudden onset weakness of the face or arm/leg
- Sudden inability to walk or talk