

PRIMARY CARE

10 TOP TIPS

Telephone and video consultations (patients)

Useful websites
macmillan.org.uk

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Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland. MAC14531_virtual-consults

- 1** **Make sure your GP Practice has up to date contact details on record** including a mobile phone number if you have one. If you have a landline and a mobile, give both but specify which you would prefer to use.
- 2** **If you think a virtual consultation will be difficult for you, explain this to the practice so an alternative can be organised.** Your practice will understand that for some people a telephone or a video consultation will not be feasible. If you need an advocate or interpreter for the consultation please let the practice know in advance.
- 3** **Check when to expect your call.** You may be given a specific time or maybe told to expect a call in the morning or afternoon. Even if given a specific time, your caller may not be running exactly to time, so try and ensure you are able to be a little flexible with your availability.
- 4** **Be aware that calls to your mobile from your GP practice may display as a 'Private' or 'Withheld' number** so, if you are expecting a call, be sure to pick up these calls as your GP may only have the capacity to try once or twice.
- 5** **It is best to be in a quiet place to have the consultation,** try and avoid busy areas of the house/work/outdoors with high levels of background noise. You may want to keep your conversation private from other people.
- 6** **As with a face to face consultation, it may help to have a friend or family member present.** Placing the consultation on speaker phone will help with this and will allow everybody present to listen and ask questions.
- 7** **Although you may have a regular GP, if they are not in practice, you may be contacted by another member of the team.** If you are unsure, clarify who you are talking to at the beginning of the consultation.
- 8** **Normal communication relies a lot on body language.** In a telephone consultation the healthcare team cannot see if you are confused or upset. If you don't understand something or would like them to slow down, don't be afraid of saying so.
- 9** **Before finishing your appointment, make sure you are happy you have been understood, have had your questions answered and are clear on what, if anything, needs to happen next** such as having tests organised, hearing from the hospital about appointments or having a follow up appointment with the practice. If you need written information sent or texted to you, let the GP know.
- 10** **If you have had a virtual consultation and feel it hasn't met your needs, it is ok to raise this with the GP or the practice.** There are significant challenges in seeing people face to face currently but, if needed, the practice will ensure this is safe and possible, so don't be afraid to ask.