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How to Prepare for a Virtual Visit with your Healthcare Professionals

Since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Ontario doctors and healthcare professionals have transformed overnight from seeing their patients in person to having virtual visits via telephones or video conference (such as WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom, etc.). Despite the reopening, virtual care still plays a big part of the day-to-day visits. It is predicted virtual care is here to stay even after the pandemic is over. It pays to prepare well for the virtual visits to make the best use of the time and to get the best care possible. Here are some tips to get you started:

How to prepare:

- Plan your meeting space. Consider privacy and confidentiality, good lighting, minimal background noise and distractions (such as televisions, radio, children, pets). Ensure that the space is clear for you to safely move around for assessments and rehabilitation (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 (such as a family member, caregiver or trusted friend) especially if you need help with language translation.

- Gather information you will need before each session, for example, health card, current medication list, pharmacy name, location and phone number, and health data, such as recent blood pressure and heart rate readings, glucose levels, weight, etc.

- Consider emailing the list of current medications ahead of time to the Toronto Heart Centre clinic prior to your appointment since it is often difficult to communicate that over the phone. You can get a list of all your medications from your pharmacy. You can also do a MedCheck if you qualify.

- Write down your list of concerns and questions ahead of time and have a pen and paper to make notes.

During the session:

- 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.

Technology tips:

- Ensure that your phone is charged.