

Telehealth Information Sheet

What is Telehealth?

Telehealth is the use of telecommunication to provide services to clients. It can be carried out by phone, video sessions and email. For video sessions, an invitation will be sent to you via email with a link to the online session, prior to the appointment.

There is a growing body of research showing that Telehealth can be a successful and alternative way to provide allied health services such as Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy. Telehealth can be used for initial assessment and therapy sessions for all ages and intervention types.

What does a Telehealth consultation involve?

A Telehealth consultation usually involves some or all of the following:

- Your therapist will discuss your health and progress with you and, where appropriate, offer information and advice
- Your therapist may model various assessment tasks or therapy techniques to be completed by you (or your child)
- Your therapist may observe a therapy task via video-link or pre-recorded video and, where appropriate, provide feedback and further advice
- Your therapist might email you to support the sessions by providing session preparations or updates, handouts, therapy plans etc.
- A brief session summary may be emailed to you after the session which includes the plan to continue at home between sessions.

In addition:

- You may bring a support person with you, as you might in a face-to-face consultation
- A technical support person might be present for part of the consultation to assist with technical issues
- You are not permitted to record the consultation by video or audio unless your therapist gives you permission to do so.

How much does Telehealth cost?

Telehealth sessions are billed at the same hourly rate as our usual sessions. Where shorter sessions are required (eg half hour phone interview) we will bill accordingly. The time we bill needs to include watching videos/ reading / email preparation prior to the session, time for the hone/video consults, and writing notes at the end of the session. We need to continue to charge for our time to provide Telehealth sessions in order to continue to provide our high quality Optiform services.

How is payment made for a Telehealth session?

Your invoice will be emailed to you after your session. You will be able to pay for your Telehealth session via credit card (via a secure credit card facility) or via bank deposit online. When payment is made, we will send you a receipt. For any payment queries, you can talk to our administration team on (03) 5334 4402.

What rebates are available?

- NDIS self-managed funding – Telehealth is covered under NDIS and can be claimed back as per usual self-managed NDIS processes.
- Medicare rebates – Telehealth therapy is temporarily covered under Medicare rebates for eligible children with a Chronic Disease Management (CDM) referral from the GP (please speak to your therapist or your GP for more information). Medicare CDM rebates are \$53.80 per session (up to a maximum of 5 allied health rebates per year). Full payment for the session is required on the day of service and then the Medicare rebate can be processed back into your account.
- Private health fund rebates – Individual funds differ. Each family will need to confirm with their own health fund whether these services are covered under Telehealth.

What are the potential benefits of Telehealth?

Telehealth may:

- Improve access to allied health services;
- Allow the clinician an increased understanding of you (your child's skills and participation in the home setting and assist you (your child) to carry-over skills learned in therapy to the home environment (e.g. mealtimes)
- Reduce your need for travel;
- Provide access to services not available in your local community;
- Decrease exposure to infectious disease such as COVID-19.

What are the potential risks of Telehealth?

Telehealth may:

- Be negatively impacted by technical problems, such as delays due to technology failures;
- Not offer the same visual and sound quality for observations and modelling;
- Require someone onsite with you to support you in carrying out the Telehealth session;
- Not feel the same as an face-to-face session;
- Not achieve everything that is required and may therefore require another Telehealth consultation or a face-to-face consultation;
- Include practices and procedures that are not as well understood in a Telehealth setting as they are in a face-to-face session; and/or
- Increase exposure to privacy and digital security risks.

Informed Consent for Telehealth services

Will my privacy be protected?

Optiform is subject to the Privacy Act 1988 and complies with obligations related to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information, including through Telehealth. The therapist must maintain confidentiality and privacy standards during sessions, and in creating, keeping and transmitting records, according to our Privacy Policy and the Australian Privacy Principles.

- At times, audio and video recordings of sessions may be taken to support the therapist's work, as might occur in a face-to-face consultation. You will be informed before a recording takes place and can refuse to be recorded for any reason. The therapist will inform you of the reason for the recording and it will be stored on a password protected computer system.
- While the therapist is obligated to meet standards to protect your privacy and security, the use of telecommunication, including videoconference, may increase exposure to hacking and other online risks. As with all online activities, there is no guarantee of complete privacy and security protection. You may decrease the risk by using a private internet connection and meeting with the therapist from a private location.
- Your therapist will use a secure, encrypted videoconferencing method when using this medium.

What Telehealth program is Optiform using?

- Optiform is currently using Zoom as the platform for Telehealth. A session link is emailed to the family prior to the appointment which they can access via their tablet, smart phone or laptop at the time of their appointment. Zoom complies with all applicable privacy laws, rules, and regulations in the jurisdictions in which it operates, and claims that it does not sell personal data.

What does 'Informed Consent' mean?

- You must be given relevant information. Ask your therapist if you have questions about Telehealth and the services offered.
- You have the right to understand the information. Ask your therapist if you do not understand.
- You have the right to choose. If you do not agree to Telehealth, you may refuse to participate. You may agree to or refuse specific activities and procedures.
- You have the right to stop using Telehealth anytime. You can change your mind about Telehealth or a specific activity or procedure, even in the middle of a session.
- You can agree or refuse in writing or verbally.
- You can ask about alternatives to Telehealth. If you refuse or change your mind about Telehealth services, your therapist will discuss any alternative options with you.

- We ask all families participating in Telehealth to complete our Telehealth Consent Form that will be sent to you via email at the commencement of therapy at Optiform.

What do I do if there is a medical emergency during the appointment?

In the event of a medical emergency (e.g. choking episode) you are responsible for contacting emergency services (calling 000) and commencing first aid (e.g. back blows, CPR). The therapist will stay on the line with you.