

Frequently Asked Questions

Outpatient appointment changes because of COVID-19

An important role of Queensland Health is to do everything possible to contain the spread of COVID-19 within our communities. Queensland Health is committed to ensuring our hospitals are well equipped to respond to an increase in demand on our Hospital and Health Services because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Queensland Health remains committed to ensuring the most time-sensitive and medically necessary care, whether COVID-19 related or not, can be delivered by doctors and hospitals.

As the Hospital and Health Services deal with the unprecedented situation being experienced across the world because of COVID-19, some services will be impacted.

Impacted services include outpatient clinics. Because of this you may have received a notification that your appointment has been:

- Moved
- Changed to a telephone or telehealth appointment
- Cancelled and postponed
- Remain unchanged

This document answers questions you may have about why your appointment has changed in response to COVID-19

Why has my outpatient appointment been changed?

Changes to outpatient appointments have been made to protect patients and staff by:

- Enabling physical distancing by:
 - postponing non-urgent outpatient appointments to a later date. Regrettably, at this time we are unable to advise a date of your next booked appointment, however please be assured we are working hard to ensure this will be as soon as possible
 - utilising technology such as telehealth and phone clinics to avoid physical contact
- Conserving personal protective equipment, such as surgical face masks and gowns, for staff to deal with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patients as well as patients requiring urgent care

Why has my appointment been changed to a phone or telehealth appointment?

If you have received notification that your appointment has changed to a phone or telehealth appointment it is because your clinical team are confident that they can provide you with the care you need without physical contact.

My appointment has been changed to a telehealth appointment. What is telehealth?

The [Queensland Health Telehealth Portal](#)¹ provides an easy, safe and secure way to videoconference (VC) with your doctor or health professional from within a web browser on your personal computer (PC), laptop or Mac; or through an app on your tablet or smart phone.

If you have received a notice that your appointment has changed to a telehealth appointment you will be contacted with further information and support on how to set up telehealth on your personal device

My appointment has been changed to a phone or telehealth appointment. Will I be called / seen by a doctor?

Your appointment will still be conducted by a clinician from your treating team. Depending on your situation your clinical team may include a Specialist Doctor, a Medical Registrar, a Specialist Nurse or an Allied Health Clinician such as a Psychologist or Dietitian.

My appointment has been cancelled due to COVID-19. Why was I not offered a phone or telehealth appointment?

If you have received notification from the hospital that your appointment has been cancelled due to COVID-19, this is likely because the clinician needs to see you in person. You will be offered another appointment as soon as the hospital can provide you with a new appointment date and time.

My appointment was cancelled. Will I get another appointment?

Yes, you will be offered another appointment as soon as the hospital is able to provide you with a new appointment date and time. You will remain on the outpatient appointment list and will not lose your position on the outpatient waiting list.

While responding to COVID-19, clinical teams are triaging patients to ensure the most urgent patients are seen first.

Please continue to monitor your condition with your General Practitioner (GP) or clinician that referred you for this appointment.

My appointment was cancelled but my condition is worsening. What do I do?

Contact your GP to discuss your care and to provide you advice on how to manage your condition. If required, your GP may request the hospital book an urgent appointment for you.

If your condition is too serious to wait or is an emergency, call 000 and ask for an ambulance or attend your closest hospital emergency department.

I received a message that I am still required to attend my upcoming appointment, but I am sick or in self-isolation. What should I do?

To ensure the health and wellbeing of all patients and staff, if you are currently

- in self-isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19 precautions,
- sick, have a fever, and/or a flu-like illness,
- or unable to attend this appointment for other reasons,

please advise the hospital as soon as possible so they can notify your treating clinical team and arrange another appointment for you at a later date.

I received a message that I am still required to attend my upcoming appointment. Why was it not cancelled?

Your ongoing clinical review in the outpatient clinic is important to ensure that your medical condition is being monitored for changes.

Your clinical team has requested you attend in person because of your specific care needs.

What do I need to know prior to coming to hospital for my appointment?

- There is a visitor restriction of a maximum of one carer per patient
- Adhere to physical distancing requirements by keeping a minimum of 1.5 meters between yourself and others when you attend the hospital
- All outpatient waiting and consultation rooms, toilets, and shared spaces are being frequently cleaned and sanitised
- Hand sanitising facilities are available in outpatient areas and throughout the hospital
- Hospital entrance points will display instructions for patients that attend who are showing signs of being unwell. If you are unwell, please phone the hospital prior to arriving for your appointment

I would like to know more about COVID-19

To stay informed and read the latest announcements about COVID-19 and up-to-date advice for your situation, go to <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this time.

If your health deteriorates or you have any further questions regarding your condition, please contact your GP.