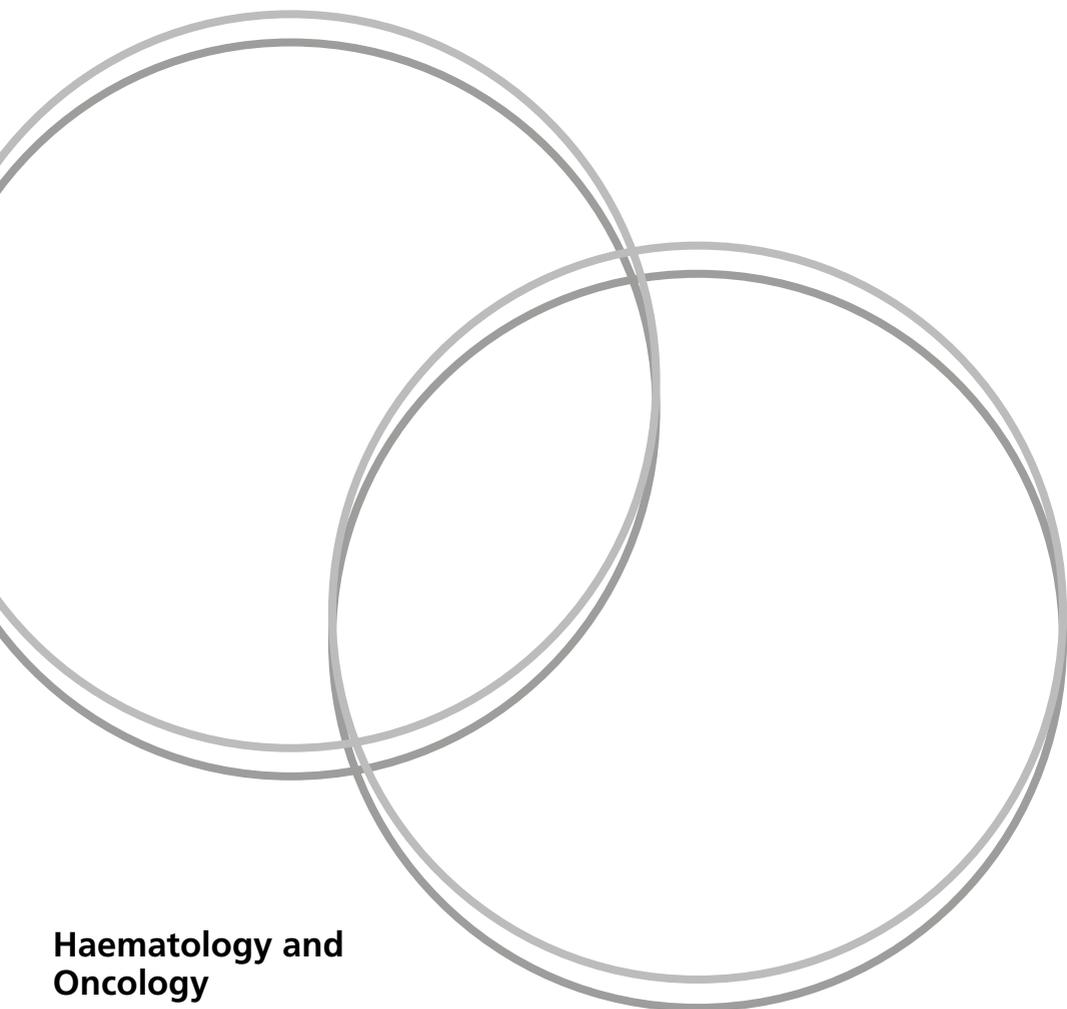




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Video and telephone appointments

**Information for patients in  
haematology and oncology**



**Haematology and  
Oncology**

## **Introduction**

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is now offering more telephone and video appointments with health care professionals.

This leaflet will provide you with information about these appointments and how to make the most of them.

## **About video and telephone appointments**

Video and telephone appointments allow you to speak to your health care professional (HCP) without having to travel to the hospital. They should be very similar to the appointments you have at the hospital. During the video or telephone appointment the HCP will ask you about your health and any symptoms or concerns you may have. You will discuss the results of any tests you have had recently.

You will have the opportunity to ask questions or discuss any concerns, just as if you were seeing the person in clinic.

We suggest you make a note or set an alarm on your telephone for the appointment.

### **How will I know about the appointment?**

You will be informed about your appointment in the usual way with a letter from the hospital. Sometimes, we will call or send a text message to tell you that your appointment will be over the phone or as a video appointment.

You will be given a time for your appointment.

We will do our best to keep to the appointment time, but sometimes there will be delays, just like there are when you come to see us in hospital. Please call the service co-ordinator if you are unable to wait more than 20 minutes.

### **Who will the appointment be with?**

We will try to ensure that the HCP you speak to by phone or video is someone you have met before at the hospital.

Sometimes this will not be possible. However, even if you have not met the person, they will know about your medical condition and will have read your notes. They will introduce themselves clearly, and say what hospital team they are part of.

The person calling you should also check your name and date of birth, to ensure that they are speaking to the correct person.

## **Telephone appointments**

If you are having a telephone appointment your HCP will call you as close to your appointment time as possible.

If the person is calling from the hospital, the call will come from an Oxford telephone number 01865 741 741. If the person is calling from another location, the call will come from a 'private number.'

You are welcome to have another person with you if you would like them to hear your conversation with the HCP.

Please make sure that your phone is not on 'silent' and that the alert volume is turned up.

If the HCP can not contact you at the time of your appointment, they may try to call again later and will try twice. Sometimes this will not be possible. The service coordinator for this clinic will contact you to set up another appointment.

## **Video appointments**

We use a website called Attend Anywhere for our video appointments. Attend Anywhere is a safe and secure way to have an online conversation with your HCP. It has been approved for use across the NHS.

## **Setting up for Attend Anywhere**

You will be sent information about how to join your appointment on Attend Anywhere. You can use a computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone or other mobile device.

Shortly before your appointment time, you enter a virtual 'waiting room.' When they are ready, your HCP will invite you to join the consultation as close to the appointment time as possible.

We recommend that you **give yourself enough time** to sign in and set up ahead of your appointment time, especially if this is your first video appointment. Most people find it easy to set up, and do not need help from anyone else.

If you are new to using video technology, you might want to have a practice run first.

- Give yourself time to set up the Attend Anywhere appointment. Join the 'waiting room' 10 minutes before your appointment time to allow for delays setting up.
- You might want to log into the waiting room a day or two before your appointment, to test that it works OK.
- Ask someone to help you if you feel you will need it. Don't leave it too late to ask for help.
- If you are not used to speaking to people using a computer screen, tell us if you would prefer a telephone appointment.

# Patient experience of video and telephone appointments

We have asked our patients about their experience of telephone and video appointments. The information below is based on their feedback.

## **Advantages of telephone appointments**

- You do not have to travel to Oxford and find parking at the hospital.
- You do not have to share the outpatients department with lots of other people.
- It can be less stressful.
- You have reduced risk of exposure to infections.
- You can have the conversation from the comfort of your own home.
- There should be less disruption to work and family commitments.

## **Advantages of Attend Anywhere**

Attend Anywhere has the same advantages as telephone appointments, but also:

- You can see the person you are speaking to.
- You can show them things that you are worried about, such as a rash.
- You can invite someone else to join you for the meeting, even if that person is a long way away.

## **Disadvantages of telephone appointments**

- You can't have a physical examination.
- You can't see the person you are speaking to.
- It can be easier to avoid talking about difficult subjects.
- You cannot have your blood test and collect your medicines on the same day.
- It is more difficult to involve another person in the appointment.

## **Disadvantages of Attend Anywhere**

- You cannot have a physical examination.
- You cannot have your blood test and collect your medicines on the same day.
- There can be technical difficulties such as poor sound or image. These happen in a minority of cases. We will have a phone number to call you on if there are problems with the computer.

## Telephone or video appointments and your safety

Telephone and video appointments can be a safe and efficient way to monitor your condition.

You will not be offered a telephone or video appointment if your doctor thinks it would be better for you to see us in person.

You might be worried about not having a physical examination. In many cases, a physical examination is not necessary. Test results, and a talk about how you are feeling, may be the best sign of your progress.

However, there are times when physical examinations are necessary. There will be other occasions when you need to see us in person. Face to face appointments are still available for people who need them.

It is important for you to keep in touch and tell us if anything changes:

- If you are worried about your health, and feel that you need to see your doctor in person, please telephone your nurse specialist.
- Contact your nurse specialist if you have any new symptoms, or any other cause for concern about your health.
- Ask your doctor or nurse specialist for information about what symptoms to look out for.

**We will always make sure that you can see a member of your medical team in person if you need to.**

**Please contact us if you feel you cannot take part in a telephone or video appointment because of a disability or for any other reason. You can speak to your nurse specialist or your service co-ordinator.**

# Preparing for your telephone or video appointment

## Let us know your situation

It is important that you keep in touch with us.

- If you have a preference for video or telephone appointments, please telephone the service co-ordinator to let us know.
- If you would like to speak to a particular doctor please telephone the service co-ordinator to ask about this. We cannot guarantee that you will see a particular doctor, but it might be possible
- Tell us if you have changed your phone number or email address.
- Tell us if you would prefer us to call on a particular number.

## Where to have your appointment

Before your appointment, think about where you would like to take the call. Try to find somewhere quiet and private where you will be comfortable and will not be disturbed. Avoid taking the call in a public place. Turn off the television and radio just before your appointment.

## Write things down

Just like any appointment, you should make a note of the things you would like to discuss. It can be easy to forget these things, especially if there is a long break between appointments. For example:

- Make a note of any physical issues that worry you. Write down when they happen and how long they last.
- Write down the questions you want to ask.
- Write down any changes that you should tell us about, such as changes in your symptoms, changes to medication or appointments with other doctors.
- Make notes about important things that you talk about during the call.

## **Invite someone else**

You can have someone with you for a telephone or video appointment, just as if you were seeing us in clinic.

- If you are having a telephone appointment, you can have another person with you and put the phone on 'speaker.' Have a test run first to make sure you can hear things clearly.
- You can invite someone to join an Attend Anywhere appointment, even if they live somewhere else. The invitation has to come from us. Tell us at least a week before your appointment if you would like us to send the invitation to someone else.
- Tell us if you would like another health care professional to join the appointment at the same time.
- Let the other person know in advance the date and time of your appointment.

## **Some technical advice for video calls**

- If other people in your home are using the internet this can affect the call quality. If possible, ask them to wait until you have finished your appointment.
- Ensure you agree to attend anywhere using your video and sound.
- If the call quality is poor turning off the video can help.
- Sometimes it is necessary to log out and log back in again to improve call quality.

## **Having blood tests in advance**

If you usually have blood tests before your appointment, then the same applies to telephone or video appointments. You should arrange your blood tests in the usual way.

If you usually have your blood tests at the GP, we will send you a blood card. You should have this blood test taken 1 – 2 weeks before the appointment.

If you have your blood tests taken at the hospital, the computer system should have a record of what tests are required. Please let your specialist nurse know if you plan to have blood taken at the hospital so that we can make sure that computer records are up to date.

## **During the call**

Video and telephone appointments are a two-way process.

- Tell us about your concerns if you have any.
- Tell us about any changes in your symptoms or side effects of your medication.
- Tell us about any changes in your medications. It might help to have your medicines with you just in case there are any questions about them.
- Tell the HCP if you are having difficulty seeing or hearing them clearly.
- Tell the HCP if they are speaking too quickly. Ask your HCP to repeat things that you are not clear about.
- Ask the HCP to summarise important points at the end of the call and make sure you are clear about what happens next.
- Tell your HCP if you were happy with the call and whether you would be happy to do the same again next time.

## **Conclusion**

We hope that telephone and video appointments offer a more convenient and flexible way of taking care of you.

However, we want to reassure you that this does not mean we are stopping face to face appointments. We will always make sure we can see you face to face if you need it.

Telephone and video appointments can be just as good as face to face appointments. But we do need you to keep in touch with us. Contact your service co-ordinator or nurse specialist if you have anything to tell us or any concerns.

## Contact details

You should contact your service co-ordinator if:

- you have questions about your appointment
- you need to tell us of a new phone number or email address
- you want to change an appointment
- you would prefer to see us face to face
- you would like to speak to a particular consultant.

### Your service co-ordinator is:

.....

Email: .....

Telephone number: .....

You should contact your nurse specialist if:

- you have new symptoms to report
- you are worried about your health.

### Your Clinical Nurse Specialist is:

.....

Email: .....

Telephone number: .....





## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Catriona Gilmour Hamilton with members of the Oxford Blood Group.  
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[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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