



## Scheduling and Front Desk Guidance

### Virtual Visits

#### **Commitment to Virtual Visits**

At Mass General, we are committed to providing the best possible care for our patients and have been proud to offer virtual visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual visits remain essential for many patients who now see these visits as part of their routine care. For this reason, virtual visits remain an important part of how we deliver care, now and in the future.

#### **Q: Why are out-of-state virtual visits being limited?**

**A: *Recent changes in government regulations determine how we can schedule virtual visits and which providers can offer them in each state. During the height of the pandemic, state and federal agencies waived many requirements to allow virtual visits to be delivered across state lines. As conditions improved, virtual care regulations and medical licensing rules began changing, resulting in our having to limit virtual visits, only offering them to patients located in **New England (MA, ME, NH, RI, CT, VT) or Florida** at the time of the visit.***

*Also, most states require that providers are licensed to practice in the state where you will be located at the time of your visit. We confirm your provider is licensed to provide care in the state where you will be during the visit. We continue to work with government officials and insurance companies to make sure virtual care remains available to all our patients.*

#### **Q: Are there any changes to in-state virtual visits?**

**A: *No, there are no changes to virtual visits that occur when you are located in Massachusetts or New Hampshire.***



**Q: If I live out of state, but will be in New England or Florida on the day of my virtual visit, can I still have the visit?**

**A:** *Yes. What matters is where you are physically located during the visit. If you are located in one of the allowed states (**MA, ME, NH, RI, CT, VT or FL**) for your virtual visit, I will document in your medical record that you plan to be in [LOCATION] at the time of the virtual visit.*

**Q: Can international virtual visits still occur?**

**A:** *International patient virtual visits may continue being conducted with all countries and territories, except those excluded by the US government. (See [full list here](#).)*

**Q: Why can't I have a virtual visit with my doctor like I did before?**

**A:** *I am so sorry, but [PROVIDER NAME] is not able to conduct a virtual visit with you while you are in [LOCATION]. We were able to offer virtual visits in [LOCATION] during the public health emergency; however, as conditions improved, state regulations changed. Now we can only offer virtual visits to patients located in **New England (MA, ME, NH, RI, CT, VT) or Florida** at the time of the visit.*

*Since you will not be in one of those locations, we can offer an in-person visit with [PROVIDER NAME], or you may want to contact [PROVIDER NAME] to determine if an alternate local provider would be appropriate.*

**Q: Can the doctor call me on the telephone, instead of a virtual visit if I'm out of state?**

**A:** *Telephone calls are not scheduled medical encounters and may continue. They are not intended to replace an in-person visit.*



**Q: Why does it matter where I'll be during a virtual visit?**

**A:** *We need to know this to ensure we follow state and federal regulations.*

**Q: Why do I need to sign a new form?**

**A:** *We now ask all patients to sign the **Ambulatory Virtual Care Consent Form** as part of the eCheck-in process in Patient Gateway, or at your in-person visit. This form is saved in your medical record. It gives us permission to schedule you for a virtual visit, allows us to send an after-visit summary to your PCP or referring provider, and protects you from potentially higher out-of-pocket expenses. A copy of the full consent form can be found on the Mass General website at <https://www.massgeneralbrigham.org/find-get-care/our-services/virtual-care>.*

**Q: What about co-pays?**

**A:** *You may now have a co-pay or deductible for a virtual visit. Many states and insurers waived these costs during the COVID pandemic, and now those waivers have expired. Co-pays and deductibles for virtual visits are usually the same as an in-person visit. Please check with your insurer to find out what your cost is for virtual visits. Depending on your insurance, you may be responsible for all or part of the cost.*

***Thank you for trusting us to safely care for you during the pandemic and beyond. We look forward to seeing you soon.***



## **GENERAL VIRTUAL VISIT SCRIPTING**

- **Rescheduling In-Person Visits as Virtual Visit with Video (Telephone or Device with Virtual Visit Software):** *We would like to reschedule your appointment from an in-person visit to a virtual visit. Virtual visits are secure, real-time video visits with your clinician, conducted from your home or other private location. If you have a smartphone, tablet, or computer with a camera, the virtual visit may be a good option. Will this work for you?*
  - **IF YES:** *Great. Can you please confirm your telephone number? (UPDATE NUMBER, IF DIFFERENT). Thank you. We will send you a message via Patient Gateway with instructions on how to join your scheduled virtual visit. You will receive a notification email to alert you when the message is in Patient Gateway.*
  - **IF NO:** *It's fine if you aren't able to have a video visit. The care provider can call you at <<Date/Time>>. Will this work for you?*
    - ✓ **IF YES:** *Great. Can you please confirm your telephone number? (UPDATE NUMBER, IF DIFFERENT). Thank you.*
    - ✓ **IF NO, and patient insists on an in-person visit:** *Thank you. I will let the care provider know that you will not be able to have a virtual visit. We will be contacting you to confirm when the provider will be able to see you in person. We will make every effort to reschedule your appointment as soon as possible. Please accept our apologies and thank you for your patience and understanding.*
- **Telephone only:** *We would like to reschedule your appointment from an in-person visit to a virtual visit. Your care provider will be calling you at <<Date/Time>>. Will this work for you?*
  - **IF YES:** *Great. Is this the best number to reach you?*
  - **IF NO:** *Thank you. I will let the care provider know that you will not be able to have a virtual visit. We will be contacting you to confirm when the provider will be able to see you in person. We will make every effort to reschedule your appointment as soon as possible. Please accept our apologies and thank you for your patience and understanding.*