



ViRTUAL GP Kit

**1 - PRACTICE MANAGER
HANDBOOK**

What is the Virtual GP Kit?

The Virtual GP Kit aims to provide everything your practice needs to begin delivering virtual consults to your patients.

The transition is simple and easy. We've done the homework and the heavy lifting so that you don't have to and can focus on your patients and your practice.

The kit includes:

- This guide for you to help your practice and GPs set up your virtual waiting room, determine what types of visits/symptoms are appropriate to schedule virtually, and decide how you'd like to approach collecting payments.
- A guide for GPs, explaining the what, why, and how of delivering virtual consults.
- A step-by-step setup guide with screenshots.

Doxy.me is the video conferencing solution designed especially for GPs. It works on mobile devices or laptops with most integrated cameras, and using external web cams. You should test your device against the minimum system requirements. The details are [here](#)

You can use your existing PMS system alongside the Virtual GP Kit to maintain a single, continuous record for your patient.

Why provide virtual consults?

You're probably asking yourself, "Why should I bother going to all this trouble in the first place?"

The argument for virtual care is simple. Countless examples from the U.K, United States, and others around the world have demonstrated that patients will choose the convenience of virtual care when available.

This is especially true among the young and healthy population who are most financially beneficial to your practice. If you don't offer the service to your patients, someone will.

Our goal in bringing virtual care to NZ is to keep patients with their GP and practice by helping practices offer their own virtual care options.

When surveyed, *52% of patients were more likely to choose virtual options if the visit was with their established GP.

We believe the value in the relationship between a patient and their GP results in better care and better outcomes.

* Brandon M. Welch 2017.

For You and Your Practice

Making a transition to virtual isn't just about the patient.

There should be something in it for you and your practice, too. There is!

The following comes directly from NZ GPs and their experiences with virtual consults.

We're not here to give you the telemedicine standard pitch.

Keep and attract new young, healthy patients.

We all know that young, healthy patients are the most profitable to our practices. They rarely need to be seen and the capitation payments for this millennial generation are crucial to practice profitability.

There are practices in New Zealand that are already offering virtual care, and the patient population increasingly expects flexibility and choice in their healthcare.

Providing virtual consults is a way to keep your practice a competitive option and to attract these new patients.

Monetize the work effort and value you are already providing to your patients.

Phone calls that are more like consults. E-mails that turn into extended advice chains. You are already spending your time to provide these services to your patients in situations where both you and the patient know that an appointment isn't really necessary. However, finding a way to be compensated for your time is a difficult area to navigate. Suggesting to shift the appropriate phone and e-mail cases to a virtual consult allows you to charge for the time you spend and add value for patients.

Reduce the time you and your staff spend on asynchronous patient communication.

When a patient reaches out with questions, it often leads to more questions. Two minutes here. Another minute there. When your staff direct appropriate phone and e-mail cases to a virtual consult, it not only helps you monetize the time but also reduces the time your nurse(s) spend on communication. Time saved here is time that can be focused elsewhere.

It can reduce costs and can increase profitability.

- By seeing patients virtually, especially by offering virtual same-day appointments, you can prevent clawbacks and reduce capitation deductions from urgent care visits.
- Supplementing the traditional practice side of your business with virtual consults can increase your schedule utilisation to fill otherwise empty slots.
- If you schedule virtual blocks to work from home, you may be able to reduce the hours for your office support staff or have them work virtually with the patients as well.
- In studies conducted on telemedicine within the NHS in the U.K., physicians reported a 25% time savings over an average face-to-face consult (allowing more consults with shorter times) as patients are more likely to receive advice and quickly get back to their day. The NZ physicians we interviewed who are already offering virtual consults, reinforced this experience.

It can give you more freedom in your day to day work.

Not all benefits have a dollar value associated with them. You can work virtual consults into your daily office routine to fill gaps in your schedule. Alternatively, virtual consults give you the flexibility to have “virtual blocks” on your schedule where you can care for patients from home or anywhere with an internet connection.

For Your Patients

It improves patient engagement and satisfaction.

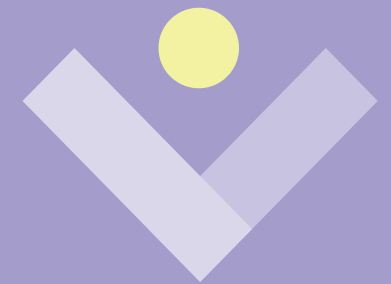
It increases the options for patients to stay engaged in their own care through increased accessibility. The convenience and flexibility of virtual consults increases patient satisfaction.

It removes barriers to care.

Virtual care allows patients the opportunity to see their GP even if they can't find the time off work, arrange childcare, or coordinate transportation over long distances.

It improves preventative medicine for chronic conditions.

The increased accessibility and convenience virtual consults adds for patients improves adherence to treatment plans for chronic conditions. More effective preventative care equals better outcomes and lower costs. The regular touch points coupled with the video element presents strong opportunities for interventions if and when necessary.



How to get started with Virtual Care

An Hour of Set Up

If you have made it this far, you are considering discussing virtual care as an option with your GP team. That's a good thing. But you're also wondering, how much is this going to cost me – time and money?

Our goal is to get you up and running with just an hour of setup and no cost to get started. If you find that virtual consults are a good fit, you can expand the services and options with very reasonably priced features. If not, stick to the free level.

The revenue impacts to your practice can only be positive - fill a single unutilised appointment slot with a virtual consult and you are net positive on your time investment.

We strongly recommend that you charge patients the same for virtual care as you would for a traditional face-to-face consult. The value and outcomes you provide through virtual consults are not different than in-person consults. Virtual is simply a convenient service/format offering for your patients to choose.

There are a few decisions you should make regarding the set-up of the Virtual GP Kit to help best meet the needs of your practice.

1. Determine your schedule for holding virtual consults.

The 'when' is just as important as the 'what'. You need to be on the same page with the GPs around whether virtual consults should be incorporated into the daily schedule as patients request them, or if the GPs prefer to set aside some focused blocks of time to work virtually.

Now that you've agreed with the GPs around what (and when) to schedule virtually, you need to adjust your practice workflows and be prepared to update your front desk staff.

Our goal is to keep this simple. The workflow for scheduling a virtual consult will be the same workflow you use today for face-to-face consults. The only change will be pasting the link to the virtual waiting room into the appointment notes for the GP and making sure the reminder SMS or e-mail sent to the patient contains the link.

2. Determine how you will charge for virtual consults.

We recommend that you charge patients the same for virtual care as you would for a traditional face-to-face consult, and you have some choices in how to do this:

- a. Using your existing process, you can run a balance for your patients which they can pay the next time they are in your office in person or via bank transfer or via another electronic collection method if you have one.
- b. You can meet with the patient via the video connection to collect EFTPOS information before or after the GP completes the consult and manually enter details into your EFTPOS machine.
- c. For a small fee, you can license the additional payments module from Doxy.me so patients can independently complete electronic payment prior to the start of the consult. The GP or a team member can simply type in the amount and the patient completes the rest.

3. Decide if the paid or free version is right for your practice.

While we recommend beginning with the free version to get comfortable with virtual consults, there are considerations you must take into account for your practice workflow.

As you might expect, the best things in life aren't free. The same is true of virtual consults. If all you use Doxy.me for is the video, then free really is free.

Although there are a number of features which you can explore on the Doxy.me site, here's a brief guide for deciding which level is right for you:

Free	Paid
A single GP user at your clinic.	2+ GP users at your clinic.
Run a balance with patients or manually read and enter EFTPOS details.	Collect digital payments online. Simply type in what the patient owes and the software will guide the collections.
Video quality in the free version is adequate when you test.	Additional video encryption options to provide better quality over slow connections.
You will send e-mail or SMS reminders through your existing PMS system only.	The system will send you an SMS alert when a patient enters the virtual waiting room for your practice so you do not have to keep a constant watch and you won't miss anyone. If a patient has not entered the virtual waiting room prior to the scheduled appointment, you can use the system to send them another reminder with the link included by simply entering their phone number or e-mail.

4. Setup.

These steps are outlined in the Setup Guide, but the point is that we've made this simple. There are no complex integrations necessary (AKA you don't need an IT guy), but you can still integrate virtual consults into your PMS and patient schedule. Once the appointment is scheduled, there is no work for you or other clinical support staff – the GP and the patient click on the provided hyperlink and the appointment starts. No downloads. No installs. Works on mobile for both Apple and Android, or desktop for both Mac and Windows. Beyond interacting with the patient over video, the consult should work exactly the same as a face-to-face consult. The GP charts within your PMS the same as today.

5. Communicate new processes with GPs and clinic support staff.

It's important that the process for completing virtual consults is integrated into your existing PMS workflows to provide the optimal experience for your GPs and your patients. The exact details will depend on your PMS system, but the main things to focus on are:

- Include the Doxy.me hyperlink in your GPs schedule/appointment notes for virtual consults. This will allow your GP to open the virtual consult directly from the PMS system. If they are familiar with bookmarks, you can bookmark the waiting room in their browser (Safari, Chrome, and Firefox – Internet Explorer not supported).
- Update the text for SMS or e-mail reminders in your existing scheduling system to include the Doxy.me patient waiting room hyperlink so patients can join directly from their phone or desktop computer. They will not be required to download an app but rather join straight from their browser after clicking the link.
- Prescription requests from virtual consults should be faxed or transferred to the pharmacy via the same process you would use if the patient called by phone.

6. Run a test virtual consult.

You can test the setup and system by joining a virtual consult with your GP. No worries, you do not pay by the consult so there's no harm here. Simply input the virtual waiting room link into your web browser on one device and make sure your GP is signed in on their workstation.

Test the workflow for your practice and make certain your GPs, your support staff, and the patients will have a positive experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What types of consults can be completed virtually?

a. Not every visit type fits into a virtual consult. Completing a physical exam when enrolling a new patient is not going to work out for a virtual consult. Generally, common sense prevails here. However, we've also spent the time searching through the published materials from NHS trials in the U.K. to determine which areas have clinical evidence of suitability for virtual consults. You and your staff can use this as a guide.

b. Chronic Disease Care – regularly scheduled check ins with high-risk, high-cost patients being monitored for chronic disease control. A virtual consult provides an effective forum for monitoring control of the condition and timing further interventions. Patients appreciate not needing to travel to the office and take more time than necessary from their day.

The top chronic conditions where virtual consults are suitable include:

- i. Diabetes
- ii. Smoking-related health issues and cessation
- iii. Alcohol-related health issues and management
- iv. Asthma
- v. Arthritis
- vi. Stroke (risk management for patients who have experienced 1 or more prior strokes)
- vii. Congestive heart failure and hypertension (medication and dietary adherence – BP readings are possible if the patient has equipment)

c. Sexual Health – although a sensitive topic, sexual health topics are well-suited for a discussion-based treatment via virtual consults. Birth control, erectile dysfunction, and concerns relating to STDs can all be addressed via virtual consults.

d. Same-day and next-day appointments for urgent health issues

– these types of consults work well to supplement gaps in your face-to-face schedule. Patients who need to see a physician urgently but do not require the resources of an urgent care facility can be seen virtually to avoid clawbacks from urgent care facilities and to better meet the overall needs of the patient. Best-practice symptoms which your staff can use to triage cases that can be addressed virtually are the following (at your discretion):

- Abdominal Pain/ Cramps
- Abscess
- Acid Reflux
- Acne
- Allergies
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Backache
- Blood Pressure Issues
- Bronchitis
- Bowel/Digestive Issues
- Cellulitis
- Cholesterol Issues
- Cold
- Cold Sores
- Constipation
- Contraception
- Cough
- Croup
- Depression
- Diarrhoea
- Dizziness
- Erectile Dysfunction
- Eye infection/ Irritation
- Fever
- Flu
- Gas
- Gout
- Hair Loss
- Headache/ Migrane
- Herpes
- Insomnia
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Joint Pain/ Swelling
- Laryngitis
- Pink Eye
- Poison Ivy/ Oak Rash
- Respiratory Infection
- Sinusitis/Sinuses
- Skin Injuries/ Irritation (i.e. Eczema)
- Skin Warts
- Smoking Cessation
- Sore Throat
- Sprains and Strains
- STD Testing
- Strep
- Tiredness, persistent
- Tonsillitis
- Vaginal/Menstrual issues
- Yeast infection

e. Routine Follow Up – these consults supplement face-to-face care that you've already provided. Although less prescriptive in the list of suitable conditions/symptoms, patients with whom you would like to monitor progress towards management of a health issue and who do not require a physical examination can be suitable for a virtual consult. We recommend starting with the prescribed areas outlined above and only branching into this area when both you and the patient are quite comfortable with virtual consults.

2. What are the medical guidelines for practicing virtually? Can I still prescribe?

a. Of course. Nearly all of the medical associations have provided a position and advice in this area. Particularly, the Medical Council of NZ and the RNZ College of GPs have given excellent guidance. In general, you should not prescribe to a patient without having seen them face-to-face and conducting a physical examination at some point (e.g. when enrolling the patient).

Subsequent prescriptions for patients under your care, when a physical exam is not required, are considered appropriate. In other words, for a patient who is enrolled with your practice and with whom you are familiar and guiding their care, you may prescribe from a virtual consultation in cases where a physical examination would not provide critical information (i.e. a patient describing symptoms of a UTI with a treatment course of antibiotics). Credit to the NZ Telehealth Forum and Research Center for compiling these resources.

Feel free to explore the links on the next page (if you are reading a print copy, electronic versions are available).

REGULATORY STANDARDS - NEW ZEALAND

- Medical Council of New Zealand – [Statement on Telehealth | Discussion on Revised Statement on Telehealth](#)
- Privacy Commissioner – [Telecommunications Information Privacy Code 2003](#)
- Privacy Commissioner – [Health Information Privacy Code](#)
- New Zealand Legislation – [Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act](#)

PROFESSIONAL BODY GUIDANCE - NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALASIAN

- Medical Council of New Zealand – [Regulating Telehealth \(including work on a revised statement on telehealth\) PDF Version](#)
- The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners – [Position Statement on Telehealth](#)
- Nurse Executives of New Zealand Inc – [Position Statement on Telehealth](#)
- College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand – [Guidelines on the Use of Telemedicine in the Intensive Care Unit](#)
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists – [Position on Teleradiology](#)
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists – [Position Statement on International Clinical Teleradiology](#)
- The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists – [Professional Practice Standards and Guides for Telepsychiatry](#)
- The Royal Australasian College of Physicians – [Telehealth Guidelines and Practical Tips](#)
- The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) – [View Website](#)
- The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia – [Position Statement on Telepathology](#)
- The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) – [View Website](#)
- The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) – [View Website](#)

3. How should I schedule virtual consults?

- a. The experience has been to let patients opt for the service and schedule their own appointments** – whether through your online system or via your front desk. The role for you and your practice is to let them know that it is an available service.
- b. Some GPs have updated their online system, such as ConnectMed, to include virtual type consults which are shorter in length and integrated into the PMS.** Others simply denote virtual in the appointment notes and manually send out the link to the virtual waiting room in an e-mail or SMS.
- c. How do patients schedule only the right type of consult?** In the experience of NZ GPs, patients only schedule virtually when it is appropriate.

Simple is often the best. If you can avoid creating complex scheduling trees and long lists of what can vs. cannot be scheduled virtually, you avoid confusion and questions.

We'll be honest. It can happen that a patient schedules a virtual consult and still needs to come in for a physical exam. What you've learned in the first 5 minutes is still relevant and will shorten the face-to-face time. However, this is by far (many hundreds to one) the exception.

4. Will the internet in my area support virtual consults?

- a. Doxy.me does not require lightning fast internet to support a good quality of video experience.** We've tested and 4G provides an adequate level of bandwidth to conduct successful virtual consults. With that said, we understand that not every corner of the country will have this level of connectivity. The minimum connection speed is 750kbps (not a lot – that's less than 1Mbps) for both download and upload. You can test your connection speed at speedtest.net.
- b. Both you and your patients can run a test** within Doxy.me prior to conducting a virtual consult to let you know if the connectivity will be strong enough. This is in the lower left corner. See the Doxy.me materials for more information.
- c. The NZ Broadband Map** (<https://broadbandmap.nz/>) can be used to get a sense of what will be available in your area.

5. Where do I get tech support if I need it?

For Doxy.me go to <https://help.doxy.me/en/>



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MARCH 2020