

Telerehabilitation in Physiotherapy

Patient Information

Telerehabilitation is the use of information or communication technologies to allow you and your physiotherapist to connect via telephone, video or other remote monitoring technology to receive physiotherapy services at a distance when an in-person visit is not possible. Here are a few frequently asked questions about telerehabilitation in physiotherapy.

When might telerehabilitation be appropriate?

There are a few circumstances where the use of telerehabilitation may enhance your physiotherapy care.

Telerehabilitation can help you access physiotherapy services that are not available in your community or allow for consultation between your physiotherapist and another physiotherapist (or another health-care provider on your team).

Telerehabilitation may be appropriate if you cannot easily attend an in-person visit. For example, if you live a long distance from the hospital or even in another province or territory, it may not be in your interest to travel to receive care, but physiotherapy may still be needed.

When would telerehabilitation not be appropriate?

Telerehabilitation should not entirely replace in-person care, but it does provide an option for assessment and treatment when an in-person visit is not possible. It is up to you and the physiotherapist to determine what is best for you, whether necessary services can be provided via telerehabilitation, and to ensure that the benefits outweigh the risks.

Will I get good quality care?

Expect to receive the same safe, quality care that you would get during an in-person visit. Physiotherapists are expected to meet the same Standards of Practice regardless of how the services are delivered.

What are the risks of receiving care via telerehabilitation?

The risks of receiving physiotherapy care specific to telerehabilitation relate mostly to concerns about the privacy of your personal health information and your personal safety. The physiotherapist is required to ensure that the location where you receive care is safe and that procedures are in place to ensure the availability of help in the event of an emergency. The physiotherapist may recommend that the visit proceed in the presence of another team member to enhance the safety and value of the visit.

Will my personal information still be private and secure?

Physiotherapists are required to ensure the privacy and security of your personal information at all times. This extends to the technology they use as well as the appropriateness of the setting in which services are delivered. For example, it may be appropriate for you to receive services in your home or at a medical facility, with the physiotherapist communicating with you from their office rather than in a public place.

Do I have to pay for telerehabilitation physiotherapy services?

It depends. Some physiotherapy services may be covered by government funding. For example, if you are having a follow-up visit after discharge from hospital. If the service is not publicly funded, you would need to pay in the same way as you would if you were attending an in-person visit.

If my physiotherapist isn't in the room who will help me and what types of care can be provided?

Depending on the setting and the circumstances, physiotherapists providing consultation or treatment via telerehabilitation may not require assistance from another person or may have assistance from another physiotherapist, physiotherapy support workers, other health-care providers, or from your family members or friends. The physiotherapist is required to ensure that an appropriate level of support and assistance is available to address your needs and ensure your safety and that you agree to the involvement of this assistance.

Examples of services that can be provided by telerehabilitation include, but are not limited to, consultation with local physiotherapists, education and instruction, monitoring your progress with a treatment program, and supervised exercise or meetings with your health-care team.

Does my physiotherapist need to be registered to deliver telerehabilitation treatment?

Physiotherapists are required to be registered with the physiotherapy regulatory college in the province or territory where they deliver services. If they are delivering services across borders, they are required to be registered in both the province where they live and the province in which they are delivering services (where you live). Check if your physiotherapist is registered before you begin treatment.

What if I have a concern or complaint about my care?

You may contact the physiotherapy regulatory college in your province, the college in the physiotherapist's own jurisdiction or both, to lodge a complaint or express a concern. The two colleges will share information if a complaint is received as well as the outcome of the complaint process.

Province / Territory	Website
British Columbia	cptbc.org/
Alberta	www.physiotherapyalberta.ca/
Saskatchewan	www.scpt.org/
Manitoba	www.manitobaphysio.com/
Ontario	www.collegept.org/Home
Quebec	oppq.qc.ca/en/
New Brunswick	www.cptnb.ca/
Nova Scotia	nsphysio.com/
Prince Edward Island	www.peicpt.com/
Newfoundland and Labrador	nlcpt.com/
Yukon	www.community.gov.yk.ca/physiotherapists/index.html
Northwest Territories	*
Nunavut	*

*When receiving care in the NWT/NU patients are advised to have the physiotherapist show or otherwise provide the patient with their licensing information as there is no physiotherapy regulatory body in these jurisdictions.