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 Last updated 8 July 2025**

# **The Ultimate Guide to Telehealth in Australia: Your Health, Connected**

Telehealth began as a lifeline during the pandemic; today it’s a mainstream way Australians manage scripts, specialist referrals and late-night fevers without leaving the couch. This expanded guide shows how virtual care slots into Medicare rules, privacy law and everyday life — and how to squeeze maximum value from every call.

## **1 How to Use This Guide**

Browse start-to-finish if you’re new to online care, or jump to the bits you need:

| **Shortcut** | **What you’ll find** |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 3** | Exactly which telehealth items Medicare rebates, and when bulk billing applies |
| **Section 4** | Conditions GPs, psychologists and physios treat online — and the red-flags that still need hands-on care |
| **Section 6** | Device, internet and privacy checks so you never drop a call |
| **Section 11** | A pre-consult checklist you can screenshot |

*(Tip: on mobile, tap your browser menu and “Find in Page” to search headings.)*

## **2 Telehealth 101**

### **2.1 What counts as telehealth?**

A **real-time** phone or video conversation with a registered Australian clinician. Messaging-only “tick-box” services that sling scripts without live contact fall outside good medical practice and may expose patients to risk.([ahpra.gov.au](https://www.ahpra.gov.au/sitecore/content/Medical/News/2023-05-31-Revised-telehealth-guidelines.aspx?utm_source=chatgpt.com))

### **2.2 A quick history**

The Commonwealth first subsidised video calls for remote patients in 2011. COVID-19 blew the doors open: from 13 March 2020 Medicare funded almost every GP and specialist to consult virtually. Most items were made **permanent on 1 January 2022**.([mbsonline.gov.au](https://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Factsheet-Telehealth-Arrangements-Jan22?utm_source=chatgpt.com), [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au/topics/health-technologies-and-digital-health/about/telehealth?utm_source=chatgpt.com))

### **2.3 Key terms at a glance**

| **Term** | **Everyday meaning** |
| --- | --- |
| **e-Script** | SMS or email token you show your pharmacist instead of paper. |
| **IHI** | Your hidden 16-digit Individual Healthcare Identifier that links records across systems. |
| **My Health Record** | Secure online summary of allergies, meds, imaging and more that any treating clinician can read (with your permission).([digitalhealth.gov.au](https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/healthcare-providers/initiatives-and-programs/my-health-record?utm_source=chatgpt.com)) |

## **3 How Telehealth Fits into Australia’s Health System**

### **3.1 Medicare cover (and the 12-month rule)**

* **GPs:** most short phone or video reviews (Level B) and longer care-plan visits (Levels C & D) attract the same rebate as face-to-face. Video is preferred; phone is OK if clinically appropriate.([servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/telehealth-billing-codes-for-mbs-items?context=20&utm_source=chatgpt.com))
* **Specialists & allied health:** rebates apply once you hold a valid referral.
* **Bulk billing:** common for concession-card holders, kids <16 and MyMedicare-registered patients during long phone consults.([hpe.servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://hpe.servicesaustralia.gov.au/INFO/MYMED/MYMEDINFO2.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com))
* **12-month relationship:** to bulk-bill most GP items you must have seen that practice in person within the past year, unless you’re:  
  + a new baby
  + experiencing homelessness
  + needing urgent after-hours care
  + living in a natural-disaster zone.

### **3.2 AHPRA safeguards**

Doctors online must: verify identity, obtain informed consent, document tech failures and advise face-to-face review when touch or imaging is crucial.([ahpra.gov.au](https://www.ahpra.gov.au/documents/default.aspx?chksum=7zFFTXILG9uVdu8aPuOC%2B5kdXLtl1NCmE9YxeHwlDcw%3D&dbid=AP&record=WD23%2F32933%5Bv2%5D&utm_source=chatgpt.com))

### **3.3 Government tools that super-charge telehealth**

* **My Health Record:** grant your GP instant access to pathology, imaging and past hospital notes in one click.([digitalhealth.gov.au](https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/healthcare-providers/initiatives-and-programs/my-health-record?utm_source=chatgpt.com))
* **Healthdirect (1800 022 222):** free nurse triage and a nationwide clinic finder with a “Telehealth” filter.([healthdirect.gov.au](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/contact-us?utm_source=chatgpt.com))

## **4 What Can Be Treated Online?**

| **Good fit for a virtual consult** | **Needs a clinic or ED** |
| --- | --- |
| Colds, UTIs, mild skin rashes | Severe chest pain or breathing issues |
| Repeat prescriptions & med reviews | Abdominal pain needing palpation |
| Mental-health therapy & GP MH plans | Wound care, injections, stitches |
| Diabetes, hypertension or asthma check-ins | Sudden paralysis, heavy bleeding |
| Parent queries about infant feeding, mild fevers | Any red-flag symptom your tele-GP raises |

*(Medicly data: 82 % of our 25 000 consults in the past year were safely completed without in-person follow-up.)*

## **5 Inside a Telehealth Appointment**

1. **Book:** via your clinic, the Healthdirect finder or **Medicly** (often same-day).
2. **Tech check:** camera, mic, stable Wi-Fi/4G, notifications off.
3. **Join:** your GP confirms ID & consent, then dives into symptoms.
4. **Plan:** diagnosis, self-care advice, e-scripts, imaging or specialist referral.
5. **Docs arrive:** SMS tokens, PDF certificates or e-referrals land in your inbox.
6. **Afterwards:** set reminders for tests, add notes to My Health Record, and share a summary with your regular GP.

## **6 Devices, Internet & Privacy**

* **Video:** recent smartphone, tablet or laptop + Wi-Fi or 4G.
* **Phone:** any mobile or landline.
* **Security:** reputable providers use Australian-hosted, end-to-end encrypted platforms under the Privacy Act 1988.
* **Quick fixes:** un-mute mic, allow browser camera, move closer to router, clear cache. If video fails your GP should ring instead.

## **7 Money Matters**

| **Scenario** | **Typical out-of-pocket** |
| --- | --- |
| Bulk-billed GP Level B | $0 |
| Privately billed GP Level B | $45-75 minus $42.85 rebate |
| Specialist follow-up video | Varies; rebate usually $80-130 |
| Allied-health tele-physio (with extras cover) | Often $0-$30 gap |

*Claims hit your bank in 1-3 days when the clinic uses Medicare online.*

## **8 Telehealth: Pros & Cons**

### **Why Australians love it**

* Saves hours of travel and waiting.
* Cuts infection exposure.
* Keeps rural, FIFO and mobility-limited patients connected.
* Allows carers or interpreters to join easily.

### **Where virtual can’t replace physical**

* No hands-on exam for abdominal masses or heart murmurs.
* Dependent on tech.
* Not for emergencies — call **000**.

## **9 Choosing a Trusted Provider**

1. **Check AHPRA registration** and any practice conditions.
2. **Read the privacy policy** — look for Australian servers & encryption.
3. **Confirm services:** e-scripts, certificates, after-hours?
4. **Scan reviews** on Google or independent forums.
5. **Look for soft touches:** carers welcome, bilingual doctors, accessible booking.

*Need a repeat script in minutes?* **Book a Medicly GP now** — no account needed.

## **10 Special Considerations**

* **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander patients:** choose culturally safe services or request an Indigenous health practitioner in the call.
* **Older adults & aged-care:** carers can join video, medication packs reviewed remotely.
* **NDIS participants:** tele-OT, psych or dietetics can be funded directly from plans.
* **FIFO & travellers:** stay connected with your regular GP anywhere in Australia (Medicare rebates don’t apply if you or the doctor are overseas).

## **11 Pre-Consult Checklist (Screenshot-Friendly)**

* Medicare card & photo ID ready
* Up-to-date medication / supplement list
* Dot-points on symptoms & questions
* Quiet, well-lit space; camera at eye level
* Device charged, Wi-Fi strong
* Optional: carer/family member present

*(Repeat prescriptions? Keep the old box handy for exact dose.)*

## **12 The Future of Digital Care**

* **Home monitoring:** BP cuffs and glucometers already feed live data to clinics.
* **Wearables:** smartwatches flag arrhythmias instantly.
* **AI triage:** bots are improving first-step symptom advice but will never replace a GP-patient chat.
* **Policy tweaks:** expect Medicare to widen video rebates and incentivise integrated MyMedicare enrolment.

## **13 Frequently Asked Questions**

**Is telehealth safe?** Yes — registered Australian clinicians follow the same guidelines as in-clinic care and sessions are encrypted.

**Can I get antibiotics online?** If clinically appropriate after a live consult; controlled drugs still require stricter rules.

**What if my internet drops?** Your GP should revert to phone or reschedule at no extra cost.

*(More FAQs? See “Telehealth Help Centre” on Medicly.com.au)*

## **14 Glossary**

*AHPRA, Active Script List, bulk-billing, IHI…* — skim these terms [here](https://chatgpt.com/c/686c627d-c2c8-8012-af30-70198f784580#) or jump back to Section 2.3.

## **15 Useful Links & Helplines**

* **Telehealth overview — Department of Health** (external, no-follow)([health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au/topics/health-technologies-and-digital-health/about/telehealth?utm_source=chatgpt.com))
* **Medicare telehealth billing codes — Services Australia**([servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/telehealth-billing-codes-for-mbs-items?context=20&utm_source=chatgpt.com))
* **AHPRA public register** (check your doctor)([ahpra.gov.au](https://www.ahpra.gov.au/documents/default.aspx?chksum=7zFFTXILG9uVdu8aPuOC%2B5kdXLtl1NCmE9YxeHwlDcw%3D&dbid=AP&record=WD23%2F32933%5Bv2%5D&utm_source=chatgpt.com))
* **Healthdirect nurse line 1800 022 222**([healthdirect.gov.au](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/contact-us?utm_source=chatgpt.com))
* **My Health Record portal**([digitalhealth.gov.au](https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/healthcare-providers/initiatives-and-programs/my-health-record?utm_source=chatgpt.com))

## **16 About the Author**

**Dr Gurbakhshish Singh MBBS, FACRRM** is a rural-trained Australian GP with 18 years’ experience in emergency medicine, chronic disease and digital health. As Telehealth Lead at Medicly he has completed over 4 000 virtual consultations and oversees clinical governance for the platform.

## **17 About Medicly**

Medicly connects Australians with AHPRA-registered GPs via secure video or phone, seven days a week. Data stay onshore, fees are transparent, and — with your consent — notes loop back to your usual doctor for seamless care. **Book your consult today** and feel better, faster.

### **SEO Pack (copy straight into CMS)**

| **Element** | **Draft copy** |
| --- | --- |
| **Meta Title** | Telehealth in Australia: Complete Guide to Online GP Care (2025) |
| **Meta Description** | Learn how Medicare telehealth works, what doctors treat online, costs, privacy & more. Expert tips from Dr G. Singh, Medicly Telehealth GP. |
| **URL Slug** | /ultimate-telehealth-guide-australia |
| **Primary Keywords** | telehealth Australia, online GP Australia, telehealth appointments Australia |
| **LSI Keywords** | virtual doctor Australia, e-scripts online, Medicare telehealth rebate, bulk-billed telehealth, telehealth doctors, repeat prescription online |

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**In summary:** Telehealth lets Australians secure quality, confidential GP care without the commute. Follow this guide, keep your tech ready, and partner with providers that value real-time conversation and tight data security — then relax knowing healthcare is only a tap away.