

A decorative horizontal border consisting of a series of colorful handprints in various colors (purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, pink, light blue, green, yellow, orange, red) arranged in a slightly wavy line across the top of the page.

We are changing how we do things during the time of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

COVID-19 is placing stress on Canada's public health system. To help with our community's preparations and response, we are postponing all non-urgent appointments in our clinic, and seeing urgent visits, one patient at a time. We hope this helps to slow the spread of infections. Our paediatricians have re-arranged their work and personal lives to be available in the clinic, the hospital and elsewhere as needed.

Our clinic is starting to offer virtual care to make sure that we can continue to care for our patients safely and effectively. This means that we will be using video and audio technologies for some patient visits rather than asking all patients to come into our office. Some of these technologies are provided by the province (currently our paediatricians are using OTN). Others have been provided by vendors such as Google or Apple to help make discussions with your care provider as easy as possible during these difficult times. Some health concerns can be addressed with virtual care alone, but in some cases your doctor may ask you to visit a hospital or other health care facility if necessary, for a physical examination.

We do our best to make sure that any information you give to us during virtual care visits is private and secure, but no video or audio tools are ever completely secure. There is an increased security risk that your health information may be intercepted or disclosed to third parties when using video or audio communications tools. To help us keep your information safe and secure, you can:

- Understand that emails, calls, or texts you receive are not secure in the same way as a private appointment in an exam room.
- Use a private computer/device (i.e., not an employer's or third party's computer/device), secure accounts, and a secure internet connection. For example, using a personal and encrypted email account is more secure than an unencrypted email account, and your access to the Internet on your home network will generally be more secure than an open guest Wi-Fi connection.

You should also understand that electronic communication is not a substitute for in-person communication or clinical examinations, where appropriate, or for going to an emergency department when needed (including for any urgent care).



If you are concerned about using video or audio tools for virtual care, you can ask our office to arrange for you/your child to visit a health-care provider or other health-care center where you/your child can be seen in person. However, please note that visiting a health-care provider in person comes with a higher risk of coming into contact with COVID19 and the possibility of spreading the virus.

By providing your/your child's information, you agree to let us collect, use, or disclose your/your child's personal health information through video or audio communications (while following applicable privacy laws) in order to provide you/your child with care. In particular, the following means of electronic communication may be used:

- Email (qhcpaedsvirtual@gmail.com is an address we have created specifically in this time – we do not send or receive any medical information by email, we use it only to send information to arrange virtual visits)
- Videoconferencing via website/portal (we are using OTN, and OTNinvite to video conference with patients and caregivers in their homes)
- Other forms of Videoconferencing (we are exploring using Skype and Facetime)
- Text messaging (we use a text message reminder service for appointments, we do not offer two-way texting with admin staff or paediatricians)