Digital Health and You: An Information Guide

What is digital health?

- the field of knowledge and practice associated with the development and use of digital technologies to improve health
- refers to tools, systems or devices that can generate, create, store or process data

Digital health technologies used in your care may include:

- virtual care platforms on a computer, tablet or smartphone
- electronic health records (EHRs)
- smart technologies (e.g., smartphones, sensor devices, smart home assistant devices)

  … and many others!

Your health-care team should provide information about:
- why the technology is being used
- the risks and benefits of the technology
- how the technology can fit into your current care routines
- how to understand and interpret information given by the technology
- when to seek care from a health provider
- cost, feasibility and accessibility requirements related to the technology
- alternative options (if the technology is not suitable)

What if I have questions about how to use the technology?
Your health-care team can answer any questions you have about the technology. Ask for a technical support phone number or website, in case you have any questions at home or after hours.

I have a virtual appointment scheduled with my health provider. How can I prepare? [1]

- Find a good location that is private, comfortable, free of distractions and well lit.
- Consider using headphones for better audio quality and/or privacy.
- Make sure you have your glasses, hearing aids, or any other devices you may need
- Have your health card nearby.
- Make sure your computer, smartphone or tablet is well charged or plugged into a power source.
- Ensure you have a stable internet connection.
- If your health provider has indicated a specific software or application for the visit, ensure it is downloaded in advance.
- Test your equipment in advance.

> **Tip!**
> It can be helpful to have a family member or friend take notes or help with translation or technology troubleshooting during the visit.

> **If you are caring for someone who has digital health technologies as part of their care plan, the health-care team should ask about your care needs too.** Let them know if you have concerns about managing the technology and what types of support you need. The team is there to help.
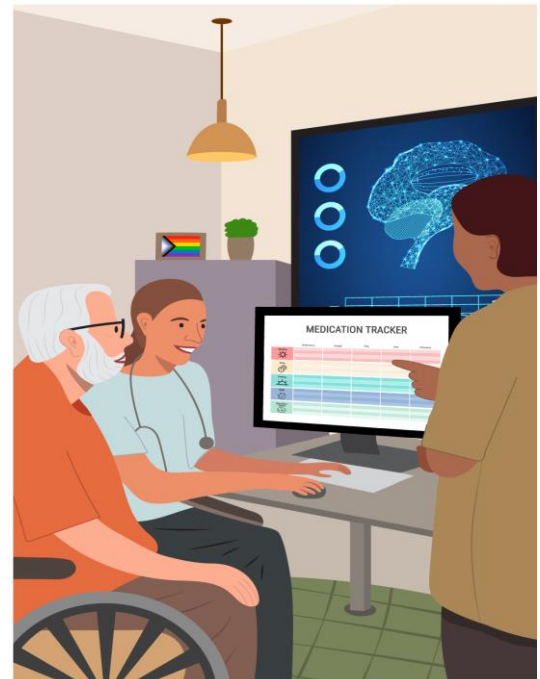
This health education fact sheet was developed using content from the RNAO best practice guideline (BPG) *Clinical Practice in a Digital Health Environment* (2024). All of RNAO's BPGs are free to download at RNAO.ca/bpg. For more information about this guideline, scan the QR code or visit https://RNAO.ca/bpg/guidelines/clinical-practice-digital-health-environment

[1] Reprinted with permission from: Healthcare Excellence Canada. Preparing for a virtual visit [Internet]. 2020. Copyright Canadian Medical Association. Available from: healthcareexcellence.ca/media/myghwzq2/hec_preparingforyourvisit_checklis.pdf