

Virtual Appointments

A Guide for Patients and Families



What is a virtual appointment?

A virtual appointment is an appointment with a health care provider or team that happens by video, using a cell phone, tablet, or computer, instead of in person.

There is no cost to Nova Scotia citizens who are covered by provincial healthcare.

How does it benefit me?

Virtual appointments offer a convenient and flexible way of accessing care, often allowing you to attend from a location of your choice. They can make it easier to include a family member, friend or other support person in your appointment, while also helping to overcome transportation challenges. In addition, they reduce the need to spend time in a waiting room, lowering your risk of exposure to illness.

What about my privacy?

Employees and physicians take all reasonable steps to protect privacy and confidentiality by following the [Personal Health Information Act](#). All applications used by Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health are reviewed to ensure that they meet privacy and cybersecurity requirements.

To help protect your privacy:

- Use a private location for your virtual appointment.
- Use a secure, private network; public networks are not secure (e.g., coffee shop).
- Use a personal email address (not work).
- Chat messages are visible to all attendees, so do not share private information.
- Do not share the appointment invitation with anyone unless they are attending the appointment.
- The appointment will not be recorded without your written or verbal consent.

For more information about privacy, refer to [Nova Scotia Health Privacy Statement](#) or [IWK Health Privacy, Confidentiality, and Access to Information](#).

How do I prepare for my virtual appointment?

- Review the appointment invitation for any special instructions.
- Ensure your device (computer, tablet, cell phone) is fully charged and connected to the internet or Wi-Fi. Data charges incurred are the responsibility of the patient.
- Ensure recommended web browsers and other apps are updated.
- Join the meeting link a few minutes early to test your audio and camera settings.
- If your video isn't working during your appointment, there is dial-in by phone option on your appointment invitation that can be used with a landline or cell phone.

There are several approved applications within Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health used to conduct virtual appointments.

You can use a computer, tablet or cell phone to join your virtual appointment. However, using a computer (Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge) or downloading the Microsoft Teams app on a mobile device will provide the best experience (functionality and stability).

Download Microsoft Teams app (skip if you plan to join from a web browser on a computer)

- **Smartphone or Tablet:** Open the **App Store** (iPhone/iPad) or **Google Play Store** (Android) > Type **Microsoft Teams** into the search bar > Tap Download/Install and wait for the app to install. **DO NOT create an account.**
- **Windows computer:** Go to the [Microsoft Teams website](#) > Click **Download Microsoft Teams for Windows** > Open the downloaded file (top right corner) > Follow the instructions on the screen. **DO NOT create an account.**

It is important that you SIGN OUT of any Microsoft Teams accounts you may be signed into (personal, work or school) BEFORE you click on the meeting link in the email invitation. If you are signed into a Microsoft Teams account when you join a virtual appointment, you will be asked to leave, sign out of your Microsoft Teams account and re-join. Refer to the **Troubleshooting Checklist** for more information.

Open the email invitation that you received from your health care provider or clinic and follow instructions below:

Join with an Android or Apple Smartphone or Tablet

- Tap the **Meeting Link** > tap **Join Now**.
- The **Name field** will appear. Type your name as instructed by your health care provider or clinic (e.g., first name, last initial). Tap **Join now**.
- The message **Someone in the meeting should let you in soon** will appear. Turn your microphone and camera off until the appointment starts and wait for instructions before turning them on.
- Tap **Leave** or  when the appointment has ended.

Join with a Windows computer

- Click on the Meeting Link > click **Join Now**.
- This site is trying to open Microsoft Teams > Open and cancel > Teams Meeting Screen will appear.
- The Name field will appear. Type your name as instructed by your health care provider or clinic (e.g., first name, last initial). Click **Join now**.
- The message **Someone in the meeting should let you in soon** will appear. Turn your microphone and camera off until the appointment starts and wait for instructions before turning them on.
- Tap **Leave** when the appointment has ended.

Join using a web browser on a Windows computer

- Tap or click on the **Meeting Link**.
- A webpage will open.
- Select **Continue on this browser** or **Join on the web**. This works best in Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge.
- Turn on your microphone and camera when the browser asks.
- The Name field will appear. Type your name as instructed by your health care provider or clinic (e.g., first name, last initial).
- Tap or click on **Join now**.
- The message **Someone in the meeting should let you in soon** will appear. Turn your microphone and camera off until the appointment starts and wait for instructions before turning them on.
- Tap **Leave** when the appointment has ended.

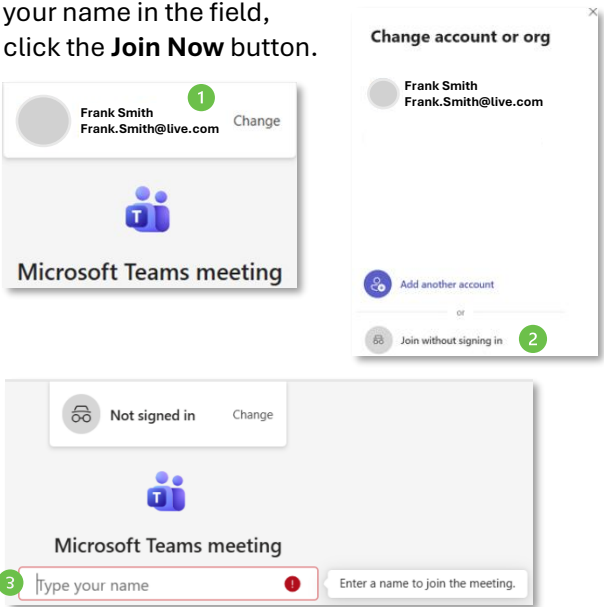
Troubleshooting Checklist

If you are having trouble joining your virtual appointment, this checklist can help you check a few common issues. Most of these are easy to fix and you don't need to be an expert to follow along.

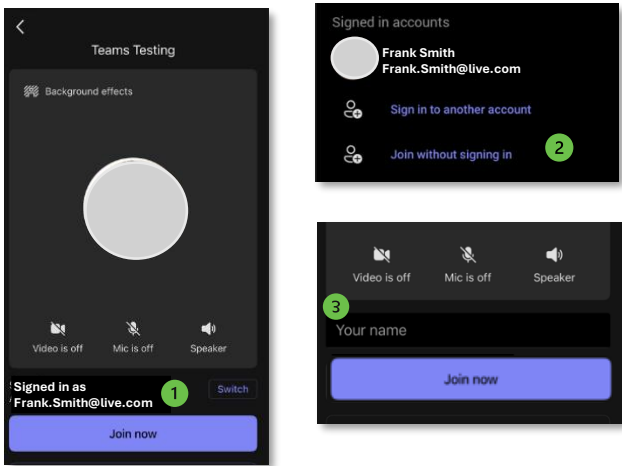
An easy way to check to see if you are signed into a Microsoft Teams account:

- Click on the **Meeting Link** in your email invitation to open the pre-join screen (where you adjust your camera and microphone).

COMPUTER: 1 Check at the top of the screen and if your email address appears (work, personal or school), click **Change**, 2 select **Join without signing in**, 3 type your name in the field (as per instructions), click the **Join Now** button. If it reads "Not signed in", click the **Join Now** button, type your name in the field, click the **Join Now** button.



MOBILE: 1 Check under your profile picture and if your email address appears (work, personal or school), click **Switch**, 2 select **Join without signing in**, 3 type your name in the field (as per instructions), click the **Join Now** button. If your email address does not appear, click the **Join Now** button, type your name in the field, click the **Join Now** button.



If you get the pop-up message "Teams would like to find and connect to devices on your local network" when installing the Microsoft Teams app on your mobile device:

- iPad/iPhone:** Settings > Apps > Microsoft Teams > Local Network > toggle ON
- Android:** Settings > Apps > Microsoft Teams > Permissions > Nearby Devices > choose Allow

Other troubleshooting tips:

- Make sure your device (computer, cell phone, tablet) is connected to the internet or cellular.
- Ensure that you are trying to access your virtual appointment on the correct date and time (check your email invitation).
- Use a supported browser – Microsoft Teams works best with Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge.
- Check that your Microsoft Teams app is up to date. If it isn't, click on the app and agree to download any available updates.
- If audio is not working: Check the volume on your device to ensure that it is not muted/turned down and/or check your audio settings on the Microsoft Teams meeting screen to ensure that the correct speakers/ microphone are selected.
- If video keeps freezing or audio is choppy, turn off your camera or close other applications, such as games.
- If all else fails, use the dial-in by phone option included in the email invitation to join by audio only.