



TRENT UNIVERSITY

Student Wellness Centre

COUNSELLING | HEALTH | ACCESSIBILITY

Consent to use virtual communications

What are virtual communications?

To communicate with you effectively and safely, your physician/nurse/student nurse/NP or staff member at Trent Student Health Services (staff at TSHS) may request to use virtual communication tools in the form of:

- Audio (telephone) and/or Videoconferencing (Zoom®) to conduct appointments.
- Electronic (@trentu.ca email) to request medically relevant photographs and/or exchange medical documents and/or communicate sensitive information, in the event that phone or in-person document exchange/communication is not an option or unsafe.
- And/or other data communications.
- If one form of technology fails in the course of an appointment, an alternate form of communication may be utilized by staff at TSHS (ex. a personal cell phone).
- You must reside in Ontario during a virtual appointment as the nurse, NP or doctor you are communicating with is licensed to practice in the province of Ontario only.

What are my rights with regards to virtual communication?

- I have the right to withhold or withdraw consent at any time.
- If consent is withheld or withdrawn, I may have the option of a referral to a local health care provider.
- The laws that protect the confidentiality of my personal information in a face-to-face appointment setting also apply to virtual communication. As such, the information disclosed by me during the course of my appointment is confidential.
- The staff at TSHS will not forward virtual communication to third parties including family members, without your prior written consent, except as authorized or required by law. Such exceptions include, but are not limited to: suspected child, elder, and/or dependent adult abuse or abuse by a regulated professional; expressed threat of violence towards an ascertainable victim; expressed threat to harm or kill self; and court subpoena.
- I have a right to access my personal information and copies of case records in accordance with Ontario privacy laws.

What are the risks involved in virtual communication?

- The staff at TSHS will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of information sent and received using virtual communication.
- Zoom® videoconferencing used through myTrent is compliant with Ontario privacy laws (PHIPA). However, the staff at TSHS cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of virtual communication.
- It is not possible to completely secure the information communicated virtually.
- Just like online shopping, virtual care has some inherent privacy and security risks that your health information may be intercepted or unintentionally disclosed.
- The transmission of my personal information could be disrupted or distorted by technical failures.
- The transmission of my personal information could be interrupted by unauthorized persons.
- The electronic storage of my personal information could be accessed by unauthorized persons.

- Use of virtual communication to discuss sensitive information can increase the risk of such information being disclosed to third parties.
- Employers and online services may have a legal right to inspect and keep electronic communications that pass through their system.
- Virtual communications can introduce malware into a computer system, and potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings.
- Even after the sender and recipient have deleted copies of electronic communications, back-up copies may exist on a computer system.
- Virtual communications can be forwarded, intercepted, circulated, stored, or even changed without my knowledge or permission or the knowledge or permission of staff at TSHS.
- Virtual communications concerning diagnosis or treatment may be printed or transcribed in full and made part of my medical record. Other individuals authorized to access the medical record, such as staff and billing personnel, may have access to those communications.
- The staff at TSHS are not responsible for information lost due to technical failures associated with my software or internet service provider.
- Email can be easily misdirected, resulting in increased risk of being received by unintended and unknown recipients.
- It is not feasible to verify the true identity of the email sender, or to ensure that only the recipient can read the message once it has been sent.
- Virtual communication is not a substitute for in-person or clinical examinations, or for attending the Emergency Department when needed.

To participate in virtual communication I must agree to the following:

- In order to improve privacy and confidentiality, I should take steps to participate in this virtual care encounter in a private setting and should not use an employer's or someone else's computer/device as they may be able to access my information.
- I will not record audio or videoconferencing appointments or communication.
- I will Inform Trent Student Health Services of any changes to my email address, phone number, or other account information necessary to communicate virtually.
- I will ensure Trent Student Health Services is aware when I receive an email from Trent Student Health Services by replying to the email or allowing "read receipts" to be sent.
- I will take precautions to preserve the confidentiality of electronic communications, such as using screen savers and safeguarding computer password.
- I agree to inform staff at TSHS of any types of information I do not want sent via virtual care in writing.
- If I wish to withdraw my consent to virtual communication, I will send a @trentu.ca email or written communication to Trent Student Health Services.
- During a videoconference appointment, I agree to be dressed as if I were attending an in-person face-to-face appointment.
- If I am physically located outside of the province of Ontario, I will notify Trent Student Health Services immediately.
- While Trent Student Health Services will attempt to review and respond in a timely fashion to my virtual communication, Trent Student Health Services cannot guarantee that all voicemails and emails will be reviewed and responded to within any specific period of time. Voicemails and emails cannot be used for medical emergencies or other time-sensitive matters.
- If my email or voicemail requires or invites a response from Trent Student Health Services and I have not received a response within a reasonable time period, it is my responsibility to follow-up to determine whether the intended recipient received the electronic or audio communication and when the recipient will respond.

- I am responsible for following up on the recommendations of staff at TSHS and for scheduling appointments where warranted.
- If I require immediate assistance, or if my condition appears serious or rapidly worsens, I should not rely on email or voicemail. Rather, I will call Trent Student Health Services or go to the nearest Emergency Department or urgent care clinic.
- If it is determined I require a physical exam I may need to be assessed in person. I will be referred to a professional who can provide such services in my area.
- I agree that certain situations, including emergencies and mental health crises, are unsuited for audio/video/computer based assessments and appointments.
- I understand that virtual care is not a substitute for attending the Emergency Department if urgent care is needed.
- If I am in an emergency or crisis situation, I should immediately call 911 or seek help from a hospital or crisis-oriented health care facility in my immediate area.
- If I am experiencing thoughts of suicide without a clear commitment to safety, I am to contact one of the following resources:
 - 911
 - Go directly to your local hospital emergency ward
 - Contact ConnexOntario for resources in your area.
 - If I reside in Peterborough I can call the Peterborough Regional Health Centre Mental Health Crises Line at 705-743-2121 ext 2054

PATIENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT:

I give my consent to use the following virtual communication tool(s) with staff at TSHS:

- Videoconferencing (Zoom®)
- Telephone
- Email (@trentu.ca email address only)
- Other : _____

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the risks, limitations, conditions of use, and instructions for virtual communication outlined in this consent form. I understand and accept the risks outlined in this consent form. I consent to the conditions and will follow the instructions outlined in this consent form.

I acknowledge and understand that despite recommendations and encryption as a security mechanism for virtual communications, it is possible that communications with staff at TSHS using virtual communication may not be secure. Despite this, I agree to communicate with staff at TSHS using virtual communication with a full understanding of the risk.

I acknowledge that either I or Trent Student Health Services has the right to withdraw the option of a particular virtual communication method upon providing written notice. I acknowledge that any questions I had have been answered.

Patient Name of Client: _____

Patient Signature: _____

Date: _____