Clinical Strong Practice (CSP)
Remote Consultations

Practice Purpose
This guide is a step-by-step process outlining how to conduct a remote consultation and assess the patient for COVID-19 symptoms. It provides guidance on how to conduct a virtual examination, conduct follow-up care, and recommend treatment.

Documents Included
COVID-19 Remote Consultations (Page 2)

- A guide to assessing patients for COVID-19 symptoms by video or phone call

Practice Origin: British Medical Journal

This COVID Strong Practice was developed in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic to enable VHA to adapt quickly for the benefit of Veteran and employee health.
**COVID-19: Remote Consultations**

A quick guide to assessing patients by video or phone call

---

**Clinical characteristics**

Based on 1099 hospitalized patients in Wuhan, China:

- **69%** Cough
- **22%** Temperature 37.5–38°C
- **22%** Temperature >38°C
- **38%** Fatigue
- **14%** Sputum
- **19%** Shortness of breath
- **15%** Muscleaches
- **14%** Sore throat
- **14%** Headache
- **12%** Chills
- **5%** Nasal congestion
- **5%** Nausea or vomiting
- **4%** Diarrhoea
- **24%** Any comorbidity

---

1. **Set up**
   - Prepare yourself and decide how to connect
   - Have current ‘stay at home’ covid-19 guidance on hand

2. **Connect**
   - Attempt VVC if possible, otherwise call on the phone
   - Check video and audio
   - Can you hear/see me?
   - Confirm the patient’s identity
   - Name
   - Date of birth
   - Check where patient is
   - Where are you right now?
   - Note patient’s phone number in case connection fails
   - (emergency protocol)
   - If possible, ensure the patient has privacy

3. **Get started**
   - Quickly assess whether sick or less sick
   - Rapid assessment
   - If they sound or look very sick, such as too breathless to talk, go direct to key clinical questions

4. **History**
   - Adapt questions to patient’s own medical history
   - Contacts
     - Close contact with known covid-19 case
     - Immediate family member unwell
     - Occupational risk group
   - History of current illness
     - Date of first symptoms

5. **Examination**
   - Assess physical and mental function as best as you can
   - Over phone, ask/er or patient to describe:
     - State of breathing
     - Color of face and lips
   - Over video:
     - Look for:
       - General demeanor
       - Skin color
   - Check respiratory function - inability to talk in full sentences is common in severe illness
   - Interpret self monitoring results with caution and in the context of your wider assessment

6. **Decision and action**
   - Advise and arrange follow-up, taking account of local capacity
   - Likely covid-19 but well, with mild symptoms
     - Self management: fluids, acetaminophen, rec avoid NSAIDS
     - Reduce spread of virus – follow current CDC ‘stay at home’ advice
   - Likely covid-19, unwell, deteriorating
     - Arrange follow up call or video, Monitor closely if you suspect pneumonia
     - Safety netting
     - If living alone, someone to check on them
   - Relevant comorbidities
     - Proactive, whole patient care
   - Unwell and needs admission
     - Ambulance protocol (call 911)
     - Seek immediate medical help for red flag symptoms

---


---

**Disclaimer:** This infographic is not a validated clinical decision aid. This information is provided without any representations, conditions, or warranties that it is accurate or up to date. BMJ and its licensors assume no responsibility for any aspect of treatment administered with the aid of this information. Any reliance placed on this information is strictly at the user’s own risk. For the full disclaimer wording see BMJ’s terms and conditions: [http://www.bmj.com/company/legal-information](http://www.bmj.com/company/legal-information)