Telehealth explained

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Doctors at Berwick Healthcare are embracing Telehealth as an effective way to connect with patients during the Covid-19 crisis.

Senior doctor Tony Atkins has led the move to Telehealth, encouraging patients to explore it as an option for their next consultation.

Dr Atkins is familiar with the use of Telehealth through his work in remote Aboriginal communities where Telehealth has been employed for over a decade.

Dr Atkins said consultations via smart phone or computer had enormous potential to take further pressure off the health system during the current epidemic.

“It you wake up with a cold or the flu, don’t come into the clinic. We will talk to you about it via Telehealth,” Dr Atkins explained.

All patients have to do is call Berwick Healthcare and book a Telehealth appointment. At the allotted time, Dr Atkins or one of his colleagues will initiate an online link allowing doctor and patient to connect.

“I had a Telehealth talk recently with a mother who rang up about a rash. We switched from phone to video and talked about the problem. People can send me pictures of rashes and lumps for example, or some limited examination may be possible via Telehealth.

“Some patients with known conditions are used to monitoring their own condition. They take their own blood pressure, weigh themselves and take their own temperature. Such information is often helpful.”

If the problem can’t be addressed remotely, Dr Atkins said an appointment is made for the patient to attend the clinic, perhaps even same day.

“Telehealth is a valuable option. It doesn’t replace in person care, but it is especially useful for vulnerable people and those who are anxious at this time.

“As they say if you can stay home you must. There is no harm to be done in making a phone consultation then the decision can be made as to whether you actually need to be seen.

“As I see it, Telehealth is a worthwhile contribution to the national effort.”

To make a Telehealth appointment at Berwick Healthcare phone 9796 1500.