

# Are telehealth services good for men?

## A GP's response



Men face **unique health challenges**, often living shorter lives than women and being at a higher risk for violence, mental health issues, and suicide. They're also more likely to engage in risky behaviours like smoking, drinking, and drug use, and, tragically, the majority of workplace deaths occur in men. To add to the issue, men typically consult with their GPs less often than women.

### A shocking survey revealed that:

**65% of men avoid seeing a doctor as long as possible**

**20% admit they're not always honest with their doctors about their health**

**37% have withheld information from a doctor in the past**

There are many reasons behind this, including societal pressures, fear of illness or symptoms, discomfort in medical settings, and a reluctance to appear vulnerable. As healthcare providers, it's crucial that we recognise these factors. Every consultation with a male patient is an opportunity to explore their health beliefs and offer guidance.

Many health conditions affecting men - such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and prostate cancer - often have no early symptoms, making early intervention key. Screening for these conditions is essential, but the most impactful health changes can often happen without a diagnosis. Simple lifestyle advice, like cutting back on alcohol or increasing physical activity, can have a significant effect on a man's health.

Telehealth presents unique advantages for men - offering a less intimidating environment, they don't have to go to a clinic, can schedule consultations around their lives, and may feel more comfortable discussing sensitive topics like erectile dysfunction or sexual health. Even if an in-person visit is necessary, the clinician can help the patient navigate the healthcare system.

Men are also less likely to seek help for mental health issues, which is why online mental health services can be a game-changer. Telehealth offers easy access to therapy, making it easier for men to get urgent mental health support when they need it. Nutritional advice is also a powerful tool - weight loss and other diet-related changes can majorly impact overall health and well-being.

Understanding and addressing the unique barriers men face in seeking healthcare is essential to improving their well-being. Let's make healthcare more accessible and less intimidating for them.