



Dermatology Virtual Care Policy

• 2-page document •

Dr. Kents and Medical Aesthetics of Muskoka are offering virtual care appointments to ensure that we can continue to care for our patients safely and effectively. We use video and audio technologies for some patient visits, rather than asking all patients to come into our office. Some of these technologies are facilitated by the Province of Ontario. Other patients may choose to participate with their virtual care over the telephone. Some health concerns may be addressed with virtual care alone, but in other cases your doctor may ask you to visit the clinic, a hospital, or other health care facility for an in-person physical examination.

We do our best to make sure that any information you provide during virtual care visits is private and secure, but no electronic communication tools are ever completely secure. There is an increased security risk that your health information may be intercepted or disclosed to third parties when using video or audio communications tools.

To help us keep your information safe and secure, you should:

- Understand that this method of communication is not secure in the same way as a private, in-person appointment in an exam room. Please read page 2 regarding the risks and etiquette of using electronic communications with Dr. Kents and Medical Aesthetics of Muskoka.
- Use a private computer/device/telephone (i.e., not an employer's or third party's computer/device) and a secure internet connection. For example, using a personal computer or tablet is more secure than at a library, and your access to the Internet on your home network will generally be more secure than an open guest Wi-Fi connection.

Please be aware that virtual care is not a substitute for in-person communication or clinical examinations, where appropriate, or for attending the Emergency Department when needed (including for any urgent care that may be required).

There may be situations whereby in-person appointments cannot be performed in a safe or timely manner. If you are concerned about using video or audio tools for virtual care, you can ask your primary care provider to arrange for you to visit a different healthcare provider or other health care center where you can be seen in person.

By agreeing to proceed with your scheduled virtual appointment with Dr. Kents and Medical Aesthetics of Muskoka, as well as attending/participating in electronic visit(s) with Dr. Kents, you agree to let us collect, use, or disclose your personal health information through video or audio communications (while following applicable privacy laws) in order to provide you with care. In particular, the following means of electronic communication may be used: Videoconferencing (including Zoom Video Conferencing, Skype, Ontario Telemedicine Network, FaceTime, etc.), email and telephone visits.

Please contact our clinic immediately if you do not consent to the above and wish to cancel your electronic or virtual visit with Dr. Kents.



Risks and etiquette/protocol of using electronic communication with Medical Aesthetics of Muskoka:

The Physician will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of information sent and received using email and videoconferencing. However, because of the risks outlined below, the Physician cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of electronic communications:

- Use of electronic communications to discuss sensitive information can increase the risk of such information being disclosed to third parties.
- Despite reasonable efforts to protect the privacy and security of electronic communication, it is not possible to completely secure the information.
- Employers and online services may have a legal right to inspect and keep electronic communications that pass through their system.
- Electronic communications can introduce malware into a computer system, and potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings.
- Electronic communications can be forwarded, intercepted, circulated, stored, or even changed without the knowledge or permission of the Physician or the patient.
- Even after the sender and recipient have deleted copies of electronic communications, back-up copies may exist on a computer system.
- Electronic communications may be disclosed in accordance with a duty to report or a court order.
- Videoconferencing using services such as Skype or FaceTime may be more open to interception than other forms of videoconferencing.

If email is used as an e-communication tool, the following are additional risks:

- Email can more easily be misdirected, resulting in increased risk of being received by unintended and unknown recipients.
- Email can be easier to falsify than handwritten or signed hard copies. It is not feasible to verify the true identity of the sender, or to ensure that only the recipient can read the message once it has been sent.

Conditions of using the electronic communications:

- While the Physician will attempt to review and respond in a timely fashion to your electronic communication, the Physician cannot guarantee that all electronic communications will be reviewed and responded to within any specific period of time. Email and videoconferencing will not be used for medical emergencies or other time-sensitive matters.

- If your electronic communication requires or invites a response from the Physician and you have not received a response within a reasonable time period, it is your responsibility to follow up to determine whether the intended recipient received the electronic communication and when the recipient will respond.
- Electronic communication is not an appropriate substitute for in-person or over-the-telephone communication or clinical examinations, where appropriate, or for attending the Emergency Department when needed.
- You are responsible for following up on the Physician's electronic communication and for scheduling appointments where warranted.
- Electronic communications concerning diagnosis or treatment may be printed or transcribed in full and made part of your medical record. Other individuals authorized to access the medical record, such as staff and billing personnel, may have access to those communications.
- The Physician may forward electronic communications to staff and those involved in the delivery and administration of your care. The Physician might use one or more of the electronic communications to communicate with those involved in your care. The Physician will not forward electronic communications to third parties, including family members, without your prior written consent, except as authorized or required by law.
- You agree to inform the Physician of any types of information you do not want sent via electronic communications. You can add to or modify this list at any time by notifying the Physician in writing.
- Some electronic communications might not be used for therapeutic purposes or to communicate clinical information. Where applicable, the use of these electronic communications will be limited to education, information, and administrative purposes.
- The Physician is not responsible for information loss due to technical failures associated with your software or internet service provider.
- Withdrawal of consent can only be made by email or written communication to the Physician.

- **If you require immediate assistance, or if your condition appears serious or rapidly worsens, you should not rely on email or videoconferencing.** Rather, you should call the Physician's office or take other measures as appropriate, such as going to the nearest Emergency Department or urgent care center.