

Media release



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Telehealth welcomed for heart disease patients during Covid-19-crisis

The Heart Foundation today welcomed the Federal Government's announcement of a \$669 million telehealth package to allow GPs and specialists to consult remotely with patients during the Covid-19 crisis.

"We now know that the most serious cases of Covid-19 – and sadly, most of the deaths – are due to complications in patients who have pre-existing health conditions, including heart disease," said the Group CEO of the Heart Foundation, Adjunct Professor John Kelly.

"Internationally, there is also evidence suggesting that people with heart conditions are now waiting too long before seeking medical attention for symptoms that might be due to a heart attack. We are receiving Australian feedback that this might be happening here too.

"Telehealth consultations will allow patients to speak to their GPs or their cardiologists quickly and safely, both about concerns relating directly to their heart health, and about concerns that they might have contracted Covid-19.

"The Heart Foundation applauds the Federal Government's timely action on this urgent issue.

"Not only will it benefit individual patients, but it will reduce stress on the overall health system by preventing an unnecessary extra burden on our doctors and hospitals for people managing existing diagnoses of heart disease, potentially preventing acute relapses in their condition that might end in hospitalisation or death.

"It will also protect our valuable health professionals, reducing their potential exposure to the virus – again reducing pressure on the health system overall during this time of crisis."

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About the Heart Foundation

The Heart Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to fighting the single biggest killer of Australians – heart disease. For 60 years, it has led the battle to save lives and improve the heart health of all Australians. Its sights are set on a world where people don't suffer or die prematurely because of heart disease.

Find out your risk of heart attack or stroke by using our [Heart Age Calculator](#). For heart health information and support, call the Heart Foundation Helpline on 13 11 12. To find out about the Heart Foundation's research program or to make a donation, visit www.heartfoundation.org.au