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**(Adults Only Service)**  
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**Patient Safety with Phone or Video consultation**

**Phone or Video consultation**

This is an innovative method of clinical consultation and has many advantages such as patient convenience. At present it also has a role in reducing the risk of exposure to covid-19. It also has some disadvantages, in particular, of me not being able to physically examine you. However, working in partnership together will minimise the disadvantages.

**To maximise the advantages**

As before, I would be most grateful if you could send me a summary of your clinical problem using one of the ear, nose, throat or dizziness complaints medical questionnaire forms which are on my website (<https://thelondonearnoseandthroatclinic.co.uk/>). Please download the blank form and complete it by hand then scan or photograph it and email it to [office@paul.montgomery.co.uk](mailto:office@paul.montgomery.co.uk) – it is your decision if you want to encrypt the email.

Please complete your medical questionnaire, and send it to me, a minimum of 48 hours before your consultation as this will improve the quality and effectiveness of our consultation allowing more time to discuss your concerns.

Please could you also complete the blank registration form which is also on my website (<https://thelondonearnoseandthroatclinic.co.uk/>). Please download the blank form and complete it by hand then scan or photograph it and email it to [office@paul.montgomery.co.uk](mailto:office@paul.montgomery.co.uk) – it is your decision if you want to encrypt the email. In particular it is **very important** that you fill in your email address **and that of your GP surgery** so that I can send both you and your GP the letter of your consultation.

*Scheduling of a consultation*

We will agree by email a mutually convenient time for me to phone you and agree if it is to be an audio or videophone call

Make sure that when we have our consultation you are in a private area so that you cannot be overheard.

*Ear Complaints: A 15-minute initial consultation*

As with face-to-face consultations if you have hearing loss it may be helpful to make sure you have no wax in your ear canals by visiting Boots or another national provider ( <https://www.bootshearingcare.com/ear-wax-removal/>) which can inspect your ear and remove any wax for about £35 for one ear and £60 for both ears. If they can provide a picture of your ear drums which I would be most grateful if you can send me a copy.

Afterwards they may perform a free hearing test (<https://www.bootshearingcare.com/hearing-test/>) which I would also be most grateful if you can e-mail me a copy.

If the removal of wax and a normal hearing test results in your ear complaints disappearing, then we do not need to have a consultation.

*Nose Complaints: This is a 15-minute initial consultation*

*Throat Complaints: This is a 15-minute initial consultation.*

I shall be using the risk stratification tool recommended by ENT UK for telephone triage (<https://www.entuk.org/ent-uk-cancer-telephone-triage-service-evaluation>)

*Balance Complaints: a 30-minute initial consultation*

Again, if you have hearing loss it may be helpful to make sure you have no wax in your ear canals by visiting Boots or another national provider ( <https://www.bootshearingcare.com/ear-wax-removal/>) which can inspect your ear and remove any wax for about £35 for one ear and £60 for both ears.

If they can provide a picture of your ear drums which I would be most grateful if you can send me a copy.

Afterwards they may perform a free hearing test (<https://www.bootshearingcare.com/hearing-test/>) which I would also be most grateful if you can e-mail me a copy.

For the examination, we may be able to do this remotely and to assist with this you can download from my website (<https://thelondonearandthroatclinic.co.uk/>) instructions on how you can assist me in examining you using a video phone call.

**To minimise the disadvantages**

A “virtual” consultation by video link or by telephone does have potential concerns as a complete examination is impossible with this type of consultation. Therefore, the information available to the specialist in order to make a diagnosis is more

limited than in a more conventional, face to face, consultation. However, working in partnership together these disadvantages can be minimised, and it is often possible to make a preliminary diagnosis and to potentially offer a trial of treatment, if appropriate.

The specialist can also go through the problem with you to check that there are no “red flag” symptoms that would suggest a serious underlying condition. In this way the specialist may be able to reassure you that it is unlikely (but not impossible), that your symptoms are associated with anything very serious.

However, in any consultation, (including face to face), it is possible that a serious underlying condition is evolving so that a condition which is not apparent at the time of the initial consultation becomes more obvious and might be very clear a little later on. This risk is likely to be greater with virtual consultations where an examination does not take place. Consequently, it may be more difficult to be sure that there isn't a serious condition causing your symptoms and additional care will be required to make sure that treatment of a serious condition isn't delayed.

It is therefore very important that the following steps are taken after the consultation: -

1. Decide if you are happy with the explanation given. If you are not then begin the process of arranging another consultation - probably through the same channels that the initial consultation was arranged - GP, Private Health Insurance, Private Hospital etc. This could be with a new specialist by way of a second opinion or as a follow up consultation with the original specialist to clarify that certain concerns have been considered. The choice is yours.
2. Monitor the progress of the problem. Serious conditions tend not to get better. If the problem appears to be progressing arrange another consultation as above.
3. If there is a dramatic or serious deterioration, seek medical help, do not delay - either through your GP or, if appropriate, A&E.