

## How to implement virtual care into your workplace



### Why virtual care?

Health is precious. It's one of our most important assets, and a few seconds can be all it takes for it to take a turn for the worse. You slip and fall while walking the dog. You burn your hand on a hot stove element by accident. You start feeling tired and irritable all the time, instead of your usual cheery self.

Your health is always changing, and so are the ways Canadians access healthcare. Today, we expect convenience in many different aspects of our lives, from streaming services to food delivery apps to weather reports. On the other hand, traditional methods of accessing healthcare services remain terribly inconvenient. Canadians have to take time off work, find a babysitter, travel to a local clinic, and linger in a waiting room so they can finally see a doctor for a few minutes.

These hurdles cause many people to delay or forego seeking healthcare. Canadians living in remote areas face even greater challenges.

Virtual care, which allows patients to see doctors and other healthcare providers from their phone, tablet, or computer, is an exciting, refreshingly convenient solution. Canadians can stay home and see a doctor in minutes for non-urgent health issues. Instead of trying to power through their symptoms or diagnosing themselves, they can speak to a medical doctor for treatment recommendations, prescriptions, lab tests requisitions, and more.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the case for virtual care, and the convenience of this technology makes it clear that it's here to stay. For Canadians, virtual care simply provides invaluable assistance.



## Virtual care as a workplace benefit

Employers are looking for ways to ensure their workforce remains healthy, supported, and productive.

Virtual care is a compelling option for several reasons. First, it's an employee benefit that reduces absenteeism, resulting in a proven ROI. Second, it's a forward-thinking solution that's aligned with many companies' progressive and innovative stances to help retain and attract top talent. Third, it solves daunting problems in employees' lives as they juggle work, childcare, and demands from other aspects of their lives.

### EMPLOYEE ADVANTAGES:

- Employees can see a doctor on their schedule – no travelling or commute required.
- A personalized, whole-person care approach, with multi-disciplinary teams to easily manage the health of employees and their dependents.
- In-app electronic medical records employees can easily share with their family physician.
- A patient-centered platform – no need to be tech-savvy to use it!
- Employees with chronic conditions can see doctors regularly for continuity of care.
- Easy access to prescriptions or renewals, allowing employees to save time.



### EMPLOYER ADVANTAGES:

- Virtual care helps employees resolve health issues faster, which reduces absenteeism while improving employee engagement and productivity.
- Through virtual care, employees all across the country have access to the same high-quality healthcare.
- Regular, preventative care reduces long-term employee illness and disability claims, generating a strong ROI to improve the company's bottom line.
- A robust, competitive health benefits package is an important differentiator for companies looking to attract and retain top talent.
- A quality virtual care program comes with seamless implementation and administration, dedicated account management, and robust reports to track and measure progress.





## What to look for in a virtual care provider

It's important to choose a virtual care provider that offers competitive features and a reliable user experience. No two employees are exactly alike, so you need a virtual care partner who can provide personalized support for their unique healthcare journeys. Otherwise, your employees may not find value in the tool they've been provided.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES TO LOOK FOR:



**24/7 access to doctors** — Health doesn't happen on a schedule. The best virtual care providers provide 24/7 access to doctors so that patients can get medical help exactly when they need it.



**Comprehensive approach to care** — Patients turn to virtual care for diagnosis, prescriptions, and lab requisitions. These services can only be provided by medical doctors or, in some provinces, nurse practitioners. Unfortunately, many virtual care providers don't actually connect patients to doctors, and instead arrange visits with nurses or health counsellors. While these professionals can be an important part of a care team, they can't solve all issues. Being able to directly connect to the right provider at the right time is essential. Look for a quality virtual care provider with multi-disciplinary teams and a whole-person, personalized approach to health for true continuity of care.



**Low wait times** — To be a truly convenient option, virtual care providers should offer on-demand visits with wait times spanning minutes, not hours or days.



**Seamless user experience** — Virtual care is only a worthwhile investment if employees actually use the service. A patient-centered platform is the key to driving usage. The platform should offer a simple and straightforward user flow for patients, making it easy for them to create an account and connect with a doctor. Customer support and care navigation should also be easily accessible.



**Industry credibility** — The virtual care landscape has changed considerably in the past two years. Seek providers who were in operation long before COVID-19, and look for a provider's patient and corporate partner reviews, news coverage, and the quality of their online presence.

Maple is the only virtual care provider in Canada to offer comprehensive care with 24/7, direct connection to online doctors in minutes.



# How to implement virtual care

Interested in adding virtual care to your employee benefit plans?  
Follow the suggested steps below.



## START THE CONVERSATION AT YOUR WORKPLACE

When discussing the company's health and wellness strategy, ask senior leadership questions such as:

- What are we doing to support our workforce in light of COVID-19 and beyond?
- Are we taking current data on employee preferences into consideration, both within our company and in the workforce at large?
- Are we focussing on the biggest pain points our employees are facing right now?
- Do our current healthcare initiatives demonstrate clear ROI and efficiency improvements?

## PROVIDE STATISTICS ABOUT ROI TO DECISION-MAKERS

- Employee absenteeism costs employers approximately \$2000 per employee, per year. Virtual care reduces absenteeism while increasing opportunities for preventative healthcare.
- Chronic illness affects up to 70% of Canadians. Without support, chronic conditions can eventually make holding a job impossible. In 2019, 50% of surveyed Canadians stated they wanted to take disability leave but couldn't afford to. Virtual care gives employees with chronic conditions the help they need to work symptom-free, with their entire focus on excelling at their job.
- Staff turnover is expensive, and so is losing out on top talent to industry competitors. 86% of survey respondents say that wellness culture is an important factor when deciding whether to accept a job offer, or to stay at their current job. Losing an employee and retraining a successor can cost up to five times the original employee's salary.

## Develop a program strategy that fits your business

Every business, like every patient, is unique. To better understand your business's structure and needs, your virtual care provider should first arrange discovery conversations. Next, your virtual care provider will be able to provide information regarding pricing and service coverage plans, a program rollout schedule, and support during initial launch.

After the initial program pilot, your virtual care provider should remain in close communication with your team to answer questions, provide employee education, and maintain an overview of usage metrics.



Want to learn more about implementing virtual care at your workplace? Contact [sales@getmaple.ca](mailto:sales@getmaple.ca) or visit [getmaple.ca/business](https://getmaple.ca/business)