



Specialist LINK

Facts Tele—advice line with a Specialist Local: 403.910.2551 or Toll Free: 1.855.387.3151

What is Specialist LINK? Specialist LINK is a new link in the chain of patient care. This is a telephone advice line that family doctors can use to contact a specialist about a patient in real time. Specialists will return a doctor's call within 30 minutes while your patient waits in your office. This quick response will increase a physician's ability to manage patients in the clinic setting with close support from specialty care.

Specialty groups that offer services through Specialist LINK

Gastroenterology
Respiratory

Who can use Specialist LINK? All physicians in Calgary and area.

When is Specialist LINK available to me? It is available *Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.* excluding statutory holidays. Specialist LINK provides support for family physicians during regular business hours, when patients are most likely to be seen in their doctor's office.

How do I connect with Specialist LINK to speak with a specialist? Call **Local: 403.910.2551** or toll free **1.855.387.3151**. Your call will be connected to the specialist by cell phone or pager. You will be prompted to leave your phone number and your call will be returned within 30 minutes. If you experience any difficulties please dial #0 and your call will be redirected to support staff.

Can I call Specialist LINK for urgent cases? **No.** For urgent cases or emergencies, we advise you to call the specialist on call.

Can I call Specialist LINK for referral status questions? **No.** Specialist LINK is not intended for information on referral status, please forward these request to Central Access and Triage

How will I make sure the specialist can contact me? Be sure to provide a **direct telephone number**, so you know the specialist can reach you directly (ie. cell or clinic back door number). *Please do not provide us with a clinic number when your clinic is closed, during lunch or at other times.*

Is there an age restriction? Specialist LINK provides consultation on adult patients aged 18 and up.

What can I consult the specialist about?

- Family doctors can seek advice from the specialist about any questions or concerns. For example, if you have a patient in front of you and there are red flags that concern you or the patient has not improved in the last six months, call the line. You may need help with navigation issues or reassurance.

- The specialist is able to support you with advice on diagnostic testing, general management, therapeutics or other clinical questions. The length of calls varies between five to 10 minutes. The specialist will not confirm a diagnosis. The specialist can discuss best-fit diagnoses and support you with a care plan.

What information do I need to give the specialist when I call?

- Patient's name and health care number
- We encourage people to use a standard, structured communication approach such as SBAR:
 - **Situation** – A statement of the problem: what is the concern?
 - **Background** – Brief information related to the problem: what has happened?
 - **Assessment** – Analysis/consideration of options: outline what you found/think.
 - **Recommendation** – Request/recommend action: state what you need.

Can Nurse Practitioners call Specialist LINK? Yes, Specialist LINK is meant to provide support for primary care givers. It is important to keep in mind the communication channels and ensure decisions regarding care are communicated through the primary care giver either the family doctor or the nurse practitioner.

Will I receive a follow up report after the phone consult? No.

Can I choose the Specialist I speak to? No. The specialists have a rotating schedule.

Can I bill for this consult? Yes the billing code is 03.01LG - telephone contact with a specialist or physician regarding advice or care of a patient.

03.01LG	Diagnostic interview and evaluation, unqualified {Physician-to-physician or podiatric surgeon telephone or tele-health video conference consultation, referring physician, weekdays 0700 to 1700 hours}	\$31.95
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Can I link this experience to CME credits? CME credits are available through http://www.cfpc.ca/Linking_Learning_to_Practice/

Where can I find some patient resources and information on care pathways?

- Government of Alberta, patient education: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Pages/default.aspx>

Gastroenterology:

- Calgary division of gastroenterology & hepatology: <http://www.calgarygi.com/>
- Canadian Digestive Foundation: <http://www.cdhf.ca>
- National Digestive Disease Clearing House: <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/index.aspx>
- National Institute of Health (NIH) IBS information site: <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/ibs/>

Respiratory:

Healthcare Provider Resources

- CTS Guidelines: www.respiratoryguidelines.ca
- CHEST Guidelines: <http://journal.publications.chestnet.org/ss/guidelines.aspx>

Patient Resources

- General Information: <https://www.lung.ca/lung-health/lung-disease>
- Sleep Disorder Information: <https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-disorders-problems>