

Specialist LINK: A guide to services for Calgary and area physicians

Tele-advice explained: Click the links below to learn more about how to use each specialty/group service

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TOP 5 TELE-ADVICE TIPS

- 1 Almost nine out of 10 physicians request tele-advice online at specialistlink.ca. If you prefer to call, you can bypass the auto attendant by using this guide to find out which numbers to press for each service.
- 2 Leave a direct number for a call-back and have your Practice ID and patient's Personal Health Number at hand.
- 3 Download clinical care and access pathways via our [pathways page](#).
- 4 Questions or technical issues? Contact us at 587.774.9740 or specialistlink@cfpcn.ca
- 5 Can't find the specialty / service you need here? Consider an [eReferral Advice Request](#)

HOW TO REQUEST TELE-ADVICE

Go to specialistlink.ca and click on your chosen speciality/group or call 403-910-2551 (toll-free 1-844-962-5465)

Physician guide: Specialist LINK tele-advice services

At a glance:

What: Family doctors and nurse practitioners in the Calgary area are connected to specialists through a real-time advice line.

When: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding statutory holidays (chronic pain, child & adolescent + geriatric psychiatry, refugee health and respirology until 4 p.m.). Calls are returned within one hour.

How:

- 1) Go to www.specialistlink.ca, click on your chosen specialty/group. Leave your direct phone/cell number and have your practice ID and patient's personal health number available. You will receive a call within one hour.
- 2) Alternatively, call 403-910-2551 or toll-free at 1-844-962-5465. Use the call tree information, below, for rapid access to your specialty/sub-specialty.

Why: Consider calling specialist link when you need

- Advice on diagnostic testing
- Advice on general management
- Advice on therapeutics
- Other clinical questions
- You just need to confirm a question or need some reassurance

By specialty/group:

ADDICTION MEDICINE > Addiction Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'ADDICTION MEDICINE' before clicking Addiction Medicine or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 8

What can I call about? Non urgent advice is available for the management of patients who experience substance use disorders (opioids, alcohol, methamphetamines, cannabis etc), as well as behavioral addictions (gambling, sex, pornography, videogaming etc). Advice is provided over the phone or referrals are made to our centralized clinic and multidisciplinary teams at AHS Adult Addiction Services Calgary.

ALLERGY MEDICINE > Allergy Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'ALLERGY MEDICINE' before clicking Allergy Medicine or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 8

What can I call about? Non urgent advice is available for allergy disorders or concerns related to both adult and pediatric patients. Some examples may include testing, screening and medication options for allergy patients who are suffering with severe symptoms despite first line treatment. Acute anaphylaxis is a life-threatening medical emergency and warrants emergency care; please do not contact Specialist LINK for these patients.

ANESTHESIOLOGY > Anesthesiology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'ANESTHESIOLOGY' before clicking 'Anesthesiology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 4

What can I call about?

- Acute and chronic pain (note the separate Chronic Pain tele-advice service)
- Complications related to pain procedures or analgesic therapy or any questions about the appropriate course of action
- Perioperative or anesthetic care
- Postdural puncture headaches
- Reassurance regarding planned intervention

Anything to note? Regarding post-surgical pain and analgesia: If a patient has special needs in planning perioperative care, needle phobia, anxiety/PTSD or a history of addiction, the patient should be referred to the anesthesia consult clinics for review and possible referral to the transitional pain service.

CARDIOLOGY > Cardiac Electrophysiology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'CARDIOLOGY' before clicking 'Cardiac Electrophysiology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 2

What can I call about?

- Requests for Cardiac Electrophysiology tele-advice should focus on managing patients with arrhythmias (bradycardia and tachycardia) and those with syncope.

Anything to note? Questions regarding patients with preexisting pacemakers or defibrillators should be directed to the Foothills Medical Centre device clinic at 403-944-1188.

CARDIOLOGY > Congestive Heart Failure

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'CARDIOLOGY' before clicking 'Congestive Heart Failure' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 3

What can I call about?

- Advice on diagnostic testing, general management therapeutics or any other clinical questions related to congestive heart failure.

Pathway: Download the [Heart Failure pathway](#) from specialistlink.ca.

CARDIOLOGY > General Cardiology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'CARDIOLOGY' before clicking 'General Cardiology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 1

What can I call about?

- How to triage/diagnose/treat your patient's potential cardiac symptoms
- Choice of cardio diagnostic test
- Discussing results of cardiac tests

Anything to note? Please contact the primary cardiologist, if there is one, prior to using Specialist LINK

- If the primary cardiologist is not available and/or the physician cannot wait, proceed with the request for tele-advice
- Hypertension enquiries should be directed to General Internal Medicine
- Urgent questions should be directed to RAAPID, as appropriate
- Post-operative enquiries should be forwarded to the patient's surgeon
- For Congenital Cardiology, please contact the Southern Alberta Adult Congenital Heart Clinic at the Peter Lougheed Centre (403-943-4504).

Pathway: Download the [Heart Failure pathway](#) from specialistlink.ca.

CARDIOLOGY > Cardiac Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'CARDIOLOGY' before clicking 'Cardiac Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 7

What can I call about? Any concerns re surgical wounds, large symptomatic pleural effusions.

CHRONIC PAIN > Chronic Pain

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'CHRONIC PAIN' before clicking 'Chronic Pain' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 4

What can I call about?

- Musculoskeletal Pain
- Neuropathic Pain
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome
- Post Herpetic Neuralgia
- Spinal Pain
- Limb Pain
- Abdominal & Chest Pain
- Myalgias
- Peripheral Neuropathies
- Consideration for Spinal Cord Stimulator
- Facial Pain

- Radiculopathy
- Headache
- Pelvic pain

Anything to note? This service is supported by Nurse Practitioners who provide multi-modal pain management suggestions for patients who have a history (in excess of three months) of chronic non-cancer pain.

Other resources:

- Calgary Pain Program: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/services/Page10887.aspx>
 - Canadian Pain Society: <http://www.canadianpainsociety.ca>
 - Canadian Pain Coalition: <http://www.canadianpaincoalition.ca/>
 - Lower Back Pain guidelines: http://www.topalbertadoctors.org/cpgs.php?sid=65&cpg_cats=90
 - Understanding Pain in Less than 5 Minutes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b8oB757DKc>
 - Alberta Health Living: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page13984.aspx>
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COVID > COVID

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'COVID' before clicking on 'COVID' or call 403-910-2551 and press 8, 1

What can I call about?

- The COVID Infectious Disease line is for patient-related questions family physicians may have when managing patients with presumed or confirmed COVID-19 infection. This could include testing, infection prevention and control and treatment questions related to adult patients with acute or chronic infectious diseases. (Please note: this line is not for enquiries about public health or workplace health and safety recommendations. Questions about quarantine orders or testing in the community can be directed to public health at phc@ahs.ca.)

Anything to note? This service is currently available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays.

Pathway: Download the [COVID-19 primary care adult pathway](#) from specialistlink.ca.

COVID > MFM Pandemic Support

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'COVID' before clicking 'MFM Pandemic Support' or call 403-910-2551 and press 8, 3

What can I call about? Non-urgent advice related to (but not limited to) the following concerns:

- General questions regarding the risks of COVID in pregnancy (for infected or recovered pregnant women).
- Management of COVID-positive pregnant women who have other maternal, fetal, or obstetrical complications.
- Timing / urgency and location of obstetrical imaging for COVID-positive pregnant women.
- Questions about referral of patients to the MFM COVID prenatal clinic.
- Questions related to non-urgent maternal fetal medicine.

Anything to note? For patients requiring urgent (or inpatient) MFM consultation and/or imaging, please contact the MFM physician on-call through FMC switchboard (403-8944-1110), available 24 hours daily.

Pathway: Download the [COVID-19 primary care adult pathway](#) from specialistlink.ca.

COVID > Thrombosis

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'COVID' before clicking on 'Thrombosis' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 9

What can I call about?

Confirmed or suspected Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and/or Pulmonary Embolism (PE):

- Advice on diagnostic tests
- Advice on general management
- Advice on therapeutics
- Other clinical questions related to a patient's DVT and or PE

Thrombophilia Testing:

- In most situations' thrombophilia testing as per Canadian Guidelines is NOT indicated
- Because the testing is expensive and rarely changes management decisions it needs to be approved by a thrombosis physician
- If you would like to discuss whether your patient may have a role for testing, please don't hesitate to call

Questions or concerns regarding need for thromboprophylaxis with surgery or illness

Anything to note? This service this service will not answer questions regarding anticoagulation in Atrial fibrillation or questions regarding arterial thrombosis.

Other resources: Thrombosis Canada www.thrombosiscanada.ca

DERMATOLOGY > Dermatology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'DERMATOLOGY' before clicking 'Dermatology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 5

What can I call about?

Routine requests:

- Advice on diagnosis
- Advice on management
- Advice on therapeutics

Emergent:

- Erythroderma (> 90% body surface area involvement)
- Drug reactions (i.e., DRESS - drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms, Steven-Johnson's syndrome, toxic epidermal necrolysis)
- Severe rash in an immunocompromised patient
- Toxic shock syndrome
- Staph scalded skin syndrome
- Kawasaki's disease
- Select infections (i.e., eczema herpeticum, mycoplasma-induced rash and mucositis or MIRM, etc.)

- Cutaneous vasculitis

Urgent:

- Erythema multiforme major
- Blistering disorder (i.e., pemphigoid, pemphigus, acute contact dermatitis)
- Neutrophilic dermatosis (Sweet's syndrome, pyoderma gangrenosum - depending on severity)

Semi-urgent:

- High-risk SCCs
- Select cutaneous T cell lymphomas
- Melanomas

MEDICINE > Endocrinology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Endocrinology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 3

What can I call about?

- Thyroid concerns
- Goiter with normal thyroid function
- Pituitary Tumor
- Hirsutism
- Infertility
- Diabetes Planning Pregnancy
- Hyperlipidemia
- Osteoporosis
- Obesity
- Galactorrhea
- Gynecomastia
- Adrenal Mass < 4 cm
- Hypertension (diagnosis of suspected endocrine cause)
- Amenorrhea
- Diabetes

Other resources:

- CDA guidelines: <http://guidelines.diabetes.ca>
- Calgary diabetes, cholesterol center website : <http://www.endocrinologycalgary.ca>
- American Diabetes Association: <http://www.diabetes.org>
- American Thyroid Association: <http://www.thyroid.org>
- Canadian HTN guidelines 2016: [http://www.onlinecjc.ca/article/S0828-282X\(16\)00192-6/fulltext#sec6.12](http://www.onlinecjc.ca/article/S0828-282X(16)00192-6/fulltext#sec6.12)
- Calgary osteoporosis website: <http://www.osteoporosiscalgary.com>

Pathways: Download the [Endocrinology access pathway](#), [Assessing Thyroid Function in Perinatal Care](#) and [Thyroid Nodules](#) pathways from specialistlink.ca.

MEDICINE > Gastroenterology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Gastroenterology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 1

What can I call about?

- Advice on diagnostic testing
- Advice on general management
- Advice on therapeutics
- Other clinical questions
- The specialist will not confirm a diagnosis; rather, they discuss 'best-fit' diagnoses and recommendations
- Digestive concerns
- Bowel concerns, IBS, Diarrhea, Chronic Constipation
- Chronic abdominal pain
- GERD
- Dyspepsia
- Polyps
- Celiac disease
- Helicobacter pylori

Other resources:

- 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/>

Pathways: Clinical pathways can be downloaded from specialistlink.ca:

- ['Chronic Abdominal Pain'](#)
- ['Chronic Constipation'](#)
- ['Chronic Diarrhea'](#)
- ['Dyspepsia'](#)
- ['Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease \(GERD\)'](#)
- ['Helicobacter Pylori'](#)
- ['Irritable Bowel Syndrome'](#)

MEDICINE > General Internal Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking General Internal Medicine or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 4

What can I call about? At this time there are no guidelines or recommendations; call appropriateness is left to the discretion of the requesting physician.

MEDICINE > Hematology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Hematology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 5

What can I call about?

- Mild and/or chronic CBC abnormalities, which includes mild increases or decreases to Hg, platelet, WBC or any combination of the three cell lines
 - Inherited thrombophilia, thrombosis advice, advice about anticoagulation
 - Advise about hemoglobinopathy results, especially, sickle cell or thalassemia trait
 - Easy bruising/bleeding
 - Interpretation of coagulation studies
 - Interpretation of SPEP or free light chain assays
 - Interpretation of iron studies and hematological malignancies
 - Please note this service is for adult patients.
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MEDICINE > Hepatology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Hepatology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 7

What can I call about?

- Liver concerns
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)
- Hemochromatosis and/or elevated ferritin
- Hepatitis C (unless cirrhotic)
- Hepatitis B immune-tolerant
- Hepatitis B chronic carrier
- Benign liver mass

Other resources:

- Calgary division of gastroenterology & hepatology: <http://www.calgarygi.com/index.php?mode=webpage&id=730>
- Canadian association for the study of the liver: <http://www.hepatology.ca/>
- Canadian liver foundation: http://www.liver.ca/liver-education-liver-research/resources-health-professionals/Clinical_Practice_Guidelines.aspx
- American Association for the Study of Liver: <https://www.aasld.org/>

Pathway: Download the [Enhanced Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease \(NAFLD\)](#) pathway from specialistlink.ca.

MEDICINE > Infectious Disease

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Infectious Disease' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 6

What can I call about?

Supporting calls related to adult patients with acute or chronic infectious diseases. Some examples of common clinical scenarios include:

- Skin and soft tissue infections
- Osteomyelitis
- Bloodstream infections
- Urinary tract infections
- C. difficile diarrhea
- Fever of unknown origin and fever in the returning traveler
- COVID 19 which may include testing, infection prevention and control and treatment questions.

Anything to note?

- If physicians have questions specifically about laboratory testing, they should be directed to the microbiologist
- Questions specifically regarding tuberculosis can be directed to TB services on call
- With respect to contact tracing in the community or post-exposure prophylaxis, these calls are best handled by public health
- Questions regarding pediatric patients should be directed to pediatric infectious diseases specifically at Alberta Children's Hospital

MEDICINE > Nephrology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Nephrology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 8

What can I call about?

- Kidney function and kidney disease
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- Hypertension
- Persistent electrolyte abnormalities
- Recurrent or extensive nephrolithiasis
- Hereditary kidney disease (e.g. polycystic kidney disease)

Other resources:

- www.ckdpathway.ca - Resources in diagnosis, medical management and referral to adult with chronic kidney disease
- www.kidneyfailurerisk.com - Online calculator for kidney failure risk prediction
- www.ckmcare.com – Resources in conservative kidney management

MEDICINE > OB Internal Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover on 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'OB Internal Medicine' or call 403-910-2551 and press 6, 1

What can I call about?

- Medical Conditions in pregnancy
 - Hypertensive disorders
 - Heart disease
 - Venous thromboembolism
 - Thrombocytopenia
 - Renal disease
 - Gastrointestinal disease
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MEDICINE > Respiriology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Respirology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 2

What can I call about? Adult respiratory medicine concerns, including:

- Pulmonary issues
- Asthma and related issues
- COPD
- Shortness of breath

Other resources:

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>

Pathways: Download the [Access: Respirology](#), [Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease](#) and [Sleep Apnea](#) pathways from specialistlink.ca.

MEDICINE > Rheumatology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Rheumatology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 9

What can I call about? Rheumatological conditions that may include, but are not limited to, immune-mediated disorders of the musculoskeletal system, soft tissues, autoimmune disease, vasculitis and heritable connective tissue disorders. Some examples include:

- Musculoskeletal concerns
- Inflammatory arthritis
- Complex arthritis
- Gout
- Polymyalgia Rheumatica
- Connective tissue disease
- Polyarthritis

Other resources:

- Alberta Rheumatology: <http://albertarheumatology.com/>
- Canadian Rheumatology Association: https://rheum.ca/en/the_cra/
- Rheumatology resource for patients and physicians: www.rheuminfo.com
- Canadian guidelines for the diagnosis and management of fibromyalgia syndrome: <http://fmguidelines.ca/>
- Arthritis Society: <https://arthritis.ca>
- Choosing wisely: <http://www.choosingwiselycanada.org/recommendations/rheumatology/>

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>

Pathways: Download the [Access: Rheumatology](#), [Gout](#), and [Peripheral Arthritis](#) pathways from specialistlink.ca.

MEDICINE > Thrombosis

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover on 'MEDICINE' before clicking 'Thrombosis' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 9

What can I call about?

Confirmed or suspected Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and/or Pulmonary Embolism (PE):

- Advice on diagnostic tests
- Advice on general management
- Advice on therapeutics
- Other clinical questions related to a patient's DVT and or PE

Thrombophilia Testing:

- In most situations' thrombophilia testing as per Canadian Guidelines is NOT indicated

- Because the testing is expensive and rarely changes management decisions it needs to be approved by a thrombosis physician
 - If you would like to discuss whether your patient may have a role for testing, please don't hesitate to call
- Questions or concerns regarding need for thromboprophylaxis with surgery or illness

Anything to note? This service this service will not answer questions regarding anticoagulation in Atrial fibrillation or questions regarding arterial thrombosis.

Other resources: Thrombosis Canada www.thrombosiscanada.ca

NEUROLOGY > Neurology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'NEUROLOGY' before clicking 'Neurology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 6

What can I call about? Advice for neurological concerns, problems with nervous system, progressive neurological disease and complex seizure disorders. Some examples may include:

- Headache, tremor, vertigo, sensory symptoms, and spells/seizures.
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Vertigo
- Headache
- Suspected Essential Tremor
- Suspected Parkinson's Disease

Other resources:

- Department of Clinical Neurosciences, which includes the divisions of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/dcns/programs>
- Movement Disorders: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/dcns/programs/movement-disorders-program/resources-patients-and-families>
- Headache: <http://www.topalbertadoctors.org/cpgs/10065>
- HeadachePro: <https://headachepro.ahs.ca>

Pathways: Download these pathways from specialistlink.ca:

- ['Access: Neurology'](#)
 - ['Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy'](#)
 - ['Enhanced Vertigo'](#)
 - ['Headache and Migraine'](#)
 - ['Suspected Essential Tremor'](#)
 - ['Suspected Parkinson's Disease'](#)
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ONCOLOGY > Hematology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'ONCOLOGY' before clicking 'Hematology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 1, 5

What can I call about?

This service will support questions related to hematological malignancies. Please note this service is for adult patients.

ONCOLOGY > Medical Oncology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'ONCOLOGY' before clicking 'Medical Oncology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 7, 1

What can I call about? Physicians can call the Medical Oncologist on call at Specialist link regarding questions:

- If your patient's Medical Oncologist (MO) is not available, the MO can assist with issues such as:
 - management of cancer related symptoms - new or worsening: pain, nausea, headaches, neurological symptoms, cough, dyspnea, fever, bleeding, constipation, diarrhea, paralysis or swelling of extremity and a new palpable lump/mass.
 - management of side effects from cancer related therapies (therapies may include chemotherapy, immunotherapy, biologics–antibody therapies and targeted tyrosine kinase inhibitors, and hormonal therapies).

Anything to note?

- For any patients undergoing systemic treatment at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre under the care of a Medical Oncologist, please ask to speak with the patient's Medical Oncologist, weekdays 8am-5pm.
 - Please refer to Surgical Oncology advice for surgical questions for cancer patients
 - For a patient with a new (or suspected) cancer diagnosis who has not been seen at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre:
 - Refer to Alberta Referral Pathway <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page10939.aspx> for referral to appropriate division.
 - Visit the Cancer Guidelines at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/cancerguidelines.aspx> for more information.
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ONCOLOGY > Radiation Oncology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'ONCOLOGY' before clicking 'Radiation Oncology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 7, 2

What can I call about? Advice related to radiation treatment side effects. It is not for a diagnosis for suspected cancer, or for any urgent or emergent treatment issues. Those calls should be directed, as appropriate, to 911 or the on-call radiation oncologist

ONCOLOGY > Surgical Oncology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'ONCOLOGY' before clicking 'Surgical Oncology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 9, 5

What can I call about? Advice related to surgical questions for cancer patients.

PALLIATIVE CARE > Palliative Care

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PALLIATIVE CARE' before clicking 'Palliative Care' or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 3

What can I call about? Palliative care consultant advice and support is available to family physicians who have patients with complex symptoms or needs that include the following:

- Pain*
- Nausea
- Constipation
- Delirium
- Opioid toxicity
- Dyspnea
- Depression, anxiety, grief, psychological or spiritual distress
- Clarification of treatment goals and management plans

Anything to note? For chronic non-cancer pain, physicians should contact the Specialist LINK chronic pain line

PEDIATRICS > Allergy Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PEDIATRICS' before clicking Allergy Medicine or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 8

What can I call about? Non urgent advice is available for allergy disorders or concerns related to both adult and pediatric patients. Some examples may include testing, screening and medication options for allergy patients who are suffering with severe symptoms despite first line treatment. Acute anaphylaxis is a life-threatening medical emergency and warrants emergency care; please do not contact Specialist LINK for these patients.

PEDIATRICS > Child Adolescent Psychiatry

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PEDIATRICS' before clicking 'Child Adolescent Psychiatry' or call 403-910-2551 and press 3, 2

What can I call about? Diagnostic or medication questions that could be answered after a brief history is provided. Medication questions could involve initiating, monitoring, changing, adjusting, or following psychotropic medications for any psychiatric consideration.

Anything to note? The psychiatry line is not suitable for physicians seeking information about resources, or those who have patients who require face-to-face consultation. Those enquiries should continue to be directed to Access Mental Health at 403-943-1500 (the rural intake line is available at 1-877-652-4700).

PEDIATRICS > Community Pediatrician

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PEDIATRICS' before clicking 'Community Pediatrician' or call 403-910-2551 and press 3, 1

What can I call about? Advice related to medical concerns for infants, children, and adolescents.

PEDIATRICS > Pediatric Otolaryngology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PEDIATRICS' before clicking 'Pediatric Otolaryngology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 3, 3

What can I call about?

- What imaging is best for midline neck mass versus lateral neck mass?
 - How to treat a draining ear?
 - What to do with a snoring child?
 - What is the workup and treatment of nasal congestion in a child?
-

PEDIATRICS > Pediatric Urology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PEDIATRICS' before clicking 'Pediatric Urology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 3, 4

What can I call about?

- Management and work up of febrile UTIs or severe Hydronephrosis
- Management and work up of ambiguous genitalia
- Concern of urgent Urology issue such as testicular torsion or obstructing ureteric stone

Anything to note? The Pediatric Urology line is not suitable for questions regarding mild to moderate phimosis without trial of steroid cream; dysfunctional voiding symptoms management without ruling out constipation or smegma under non-circumcised foreskin.

PSYCHIATRY > Adult Psychiatry

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PSYCHIATRY' before clicking 'Adult Psychiatry' or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 1

What can I call about? Physicians looking for a quick answer – and those seeking non-urgent clinical advice on therapeutics, management, or diagnostics, as well as standards of care and practice guidelines, are invited to call the service.

Anything to note? The psychiatry line is not suitable for physicians seeking information about resources, or those who have patients who require face-to-face consultation. Those enquiries should continue to be directed to Access Mental Health at 403-943-1500 (the rural intake line is available at 1-877-652-4700).

PSYCHIATRY > Child Adolescent Psychiatry

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PSYCHIATRY' before clicking 'Child Adolescent Psychiatry' or call 403-910-2551 and press 3, 2

What can I call about? Diagnostic or medication questions that could be answered after a brief history is provided. Medication questions could involve initiating, monitoring, changing, adjusting, or following psychotropic medications for any psychiatric consideration.

Anything to note? The psychiatry line is not suitable for physicians seeking information about resources, or those who have patients who require face-to-face consultation. Those enquiries should continue to be directed to Access Mental Health at 403-943-1500 (the rural intake line is available at 1-877-652-4700).

PSYCHIATRY > Geriatric Psychiatry

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'PSYCHIATRY' before clicking 'Geriatric Psychiatry' or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 2

What can I call about? Examples include:

- Antidepressant choice with different medical comorbidities or symptom profile
 - Whether or not antipsychotics should be initiated for agitation or psychotic symptoms
 - Choice of antipsychotic (for example if prolonged QTc or other concerns)
 - Whether a patient would be appropriate for referral to certain resources (such as R and R unit at Glenmore Carewest, SAILL program) and how to access
 - Whether to start a cholinesterase inhibitor, recommended preliminary work-up for new onset hallucinations or cognitive changes later in life
-

SPECIALTY SERVICES > Clinical Pharmacology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SPECIALTY SERVICES' before clicking 'Clinical Pharmacology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 6

What can I call about? The Clinical Pharmacology physician-based consultation service is a medical subspecialty that translates the basic science of Pharmacology into the clinical practice of Therapeutics, focusing on the application of pharmacological principles and methods. It is based on in-depth knowledge of human pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, pharmacogenomics, toxicology and familiarity with how to assess the strengths and limitations of randomized trials of pharmaceutical products.

The Clinical Pharmacology Physician Consultation Service in Calgary is based at the Foothills Medical Centre (FMC). The physicians supporting the service have completed formal training in the following areas: internal medicine, clinical pharmacology, emergency medicine and medical toxicology. The advice service is available for adult patients with any of the following issues:

- Suspected adverse drug events of any kind (e.g. prolonged QTc, DRESS syndrome, Stevens Johnson syndrome, abnormal laboratory results)
- Questions about restarting medications after an adverse drug event
- Specific therapeutically complex conditions including uncontrolled hypertension
- Unusual or unpredicted therapeutic responses to medications (unexplained inefficacy or toxic effects)
- New or unusual drug interactions
- Supra or subtherapeutic drug concentrations
- Deprescribing (advice on reducing or stopping medications that are no longer needed)
- Polypharmacy advice
- Management of substance withdrawal/drug discontinuation syndromes
- Suspected drug-induced laboratory abnormalities
- Questions about pharmacogenomic testing
- Therapeutic drug monitoring questions not normally managed by the Clinical Pharmacist

Anything to note?

When would I consult the Pharmacist instead of the Clinical Pharmacologist on call?

Clinical Pharmacology Physicians group is complimentary to a pharmacist service, we recognize that not all physicians have this service available to them. If you work closely with a clinical pharmacist you may consider the following reasons to consult your pharmacist first:

- Drug interaction checks
- Questions about common adverse drug reactions
- Safe drug dosing in renal or hepatic dysfunction
- Medication reconciliation completion or questions
- Common therapeutic drug monitoring questions (e.g. vancomycin, gentamicin, digoxin)

When would I consult PADIS instead of the Clinical Pharmacologist on call?

The Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS) Medical Toxicology consultation service sees acutely poisoned patients throughout the city. Please continue to refer all questions and consultations about such patients to PADIS at 1-800-332-1414, option 1.

Does the Clinical Pharmacologist on call manage issues related to addiction such as initiating opioid substitution therapy or arranging outpatient addictions follow up?

No. Referrals to the FMC Addiction Service can be made Monday to Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. through SCM. Access to an Addiction Medicine specialist in opioid dependency is also available between 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., 7 days a week through **RAAPID South** (for patients in and south of Red Deer, Alberta) 1-800-661-1700 (Canada ONLY) 403-944-4486. More information is available at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page15558.aspx>.

SPECIALTY SERVICES > Refugee Health

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over ‘SPECIALTY SERVICES’ before clicking ‘Refugee Health’ or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 5

What can I call about?

A team of physicians based at Mosaic Primary Care Network’s Refugee Health Clinic are available to offer advice. The physicians staffing the tele-advice line have Diplomas in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene and many years’ experience of working with refugees. Examples of questions could include:

- Screening tests for newcomers
- Management of health issues specific to newcomers (e.g. schistosomiasis, mental health)
- Billing and coverage for refugees

Other resources:

More information about the Refugee Health Clinic is also available at <http://mosaicpcn.ca/services/Pages/Refugee-Health-Services.aspx>

SPECIALTY SERVICES > Wound Care

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SPECIALTY SERVICES' before clicking 'Wound Care' or call 403-910-2551 and press 5, 7

What can I call about?

Wound Care services is supported by a team of multidisciplinary physicians who are IIWCC (International Interprofessional Wound Care Course), SAWC (Symposium on Advanced Wound Care) and/or AAWC (Association for the Advancement of Wound Care) trained and mentored in the care of patients of all ages, with non-healing wounds. The advice service is available for adult patients with any of the following issues:

- Does my patient have a chronic wound? What are my next steps to manage this problem?
- How do I choose a dressing protocol or more simply, what dressing should I apply?
- When do I reassess the wound for progress?
- How do I know if an antibiotic is needed?
- What is the approach for treating a diabetic foot wound?
- My patient had stitches in the ER 5 days ago and now the wound has dehiscence. What do I do now?
- What to apply on a burn
- How to care for sutured wounds
- When should I refer to home care wound services?
- How do I get my patient to the wound clinic at the Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre?

Anything to note?

Wound Care Clinic is located at the Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre and if patient needs to be seen, referrals are accepted through CAT for Integrated Home Care Team: Fax 403-943-1602

SPORTS MEDICINE > Sports Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SPORTS MEDICINE' before clicking 'Sports Medicine' or call 403-910-2551 and press 2, 7

What can I call about? Diagnosis and management of acute, chronic, and degenerative musculoskeletal problems including:

- Tendon and ligament injuries/ruptures - Joint instability - Compartment syndromes, bone stress injuries -- Osteoarthritis
- Concussion
- Injury prevention
- Prescription of exercise and physical activity for chronic disease management

Anything to note? This includes patients of all ages and those with disability. Injuries do not need to be sports related. Conditions not appropriate for this service include acute or chronic bone fractures, post-surgical complications and bone, joint and soft tissue infections.

SURGERY > Cardiac Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY' before clicking 'Cardiac Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 7

What can I call about? Any concerns re surgical wounds, large symptomatic pleural effusions.

SURGERY > Orthopaedic Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY' before clicking 'Orthopaedic Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 6

What can I call about? Non-urgent advice related to:

- Osteo-arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, or other inflammatory conditions for interim management suggestions
- New or undiagnosed concerns with foot and ankle, wrist, shoulders, hip and or knee problems
- Help diagnosing a condition or injury or to discuss issues related to surgical conditions
- Please note: Acute fractures within eight weeks of injury should be directed to the orthopaedic surgeons on call at the sites through the Regional On Call Application (ROCA) as they often require a cast clinic follow up

Pathway: Download [Access: Orthopaedics](#) pathway from specialistlink.ca

SURGERY > Otolaryngology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY' before clicking 'Otolaryngology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 4

What can I call about? Interpretation of incidental results for imaging – for example, cysts in sinuses (imaging reports need to be shared). General questions about next steps for many conditions -- examples may include how to handle a neck lump (at least an ultrasound should have been completed)

Other examples:

- General issues or ear, nose and throat conditions
- Chronic sinusitis
- Epistaxis
- Malformation
- Swallowing and voice disorders
- Mass of nasal sinus
- Nasal symptoms
- Sino nasal papilloma
- Thyroid disease rhinology

SURGERY > Podiatric Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY' before clicking 'Podiatric Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 1

What can I call about? Advice related to podiatric surgery. Examples include:

- Foot fracture
 - Laceration
 - Foot pain? What do I do at this point?
 - Essentially any questions regarding foot pain
 - Advice related to diagnostic testing needed before referral
-

SURGERY > Spinal Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY' before clicking 'Spinal Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 3

What can I call about? Non-urgent advice related to the following:

- Spinal cord compression, myelopathy
 - Radiculopathy secondary to spinal stenosis or herniated disc
 - Spondylolisthesis
 - Spinal deformity (scoliosis, kyphosis)
 - Tumours of the spinal column
 - Trauma -- fractures or ligamentous injury
 - Neurogenic claudication/spinal stenosis
 - Spinal infection -- discitis/osteomyelitis/epidural abscess
 - Post-operative management questions (when the operating surgeon is unavailable)
-

SURGERY > Urology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY' before clicking 'Urology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 8

What can I call about? Any urological disorders.

Pathway: An Urology access pathway can be downloaded from the [Clinical Pathways and Specialty Access](#) page. Select 'Urology' and click on 'Access: Urology'.

SURGERY > Vascular Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY' before clicking 'Vascular Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 4, 2

What can I call about? Non-urgent advice related to vascular surgery that could include:

- Aneurysms
 - Extra-cranial carotid disease
 - Peripheral vascular disease
 - Venous disease
-

SURGERY (GENERAL) > Colorectal Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY (GENERAL)' before clicking 'Colorectal Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 9, 2

What can I call about? Advice related to colorectal surgery.

SURGERY (GENERAL) > Endocrine Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY (GENERAL)' before clicking 'Endocrine Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 9, 3

What can I call about? Advice related to endocrine surgery.

SURGERY (GENERAL) > General Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY (GENERAL)' before clicking 'General Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 9, 1

What can I call about? Urgent advice support for adults requiring general surgery procedures, including:

- small and large bowel surgery
 - gallbladder
 - mastectomy or breast surgery
 - hernia repairs
 - Post-operative management questions (when the operating surgeon is unavailable)
-

SURGERY (GENERAL) > Hepatobiliary Surgery

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY (GENERAL)' before clicking 'Hepatobiliary Surgery' or call 403-910-2551 and press 9, 4

What can I call about? Advice related to hepatobiliary surgery.

SURGERY (GENERAL) > Surgical Oncology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY (GENERAL)' before clicking 'Surgical Oncology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 9, 5

What can I call about? Advice related to surgical questions for cancer patients.

SURGERY (GENERAL) > Upper GI Bariatrics

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'SURGERY (GENERAL)' before clicking 'Upper GI Bariatrics' or call 403-910-2551 and press 9, 6

What can I call about? Advice related to upper gastrointestinal and bariatric surgical procedures.

WOMEN'S HEALTH > Breastfeeding IBCLC

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'WOMEN'S HEALTH' before clicking 'Breastfeeding IBCLC' or call 403-910-2551 and press 6, 3

What can I call about? A team of physicians who have an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) certificate is available to provide advice regarding any breastfeeding concerns. Examples include:

- What medications or advice do you recommend for mother's milk supply?
 - Is a specific medication safe with breastfeeding?
 - What recommendations do you have for breastfeeding and a COVID+ mother?
 - What is the dose of domperidone for a breast-feeding mother? What if they are on QT prolonging medications?
 - What is the recommended treatment plan for a suspected yeast infection in mother's breast?
 - Could the baby have a milk protein allergy?
-

WOMEN'S HEALTH > OB Internal Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'WOMEN'S HEALTH' before clicking 'OB Internal Medicine' or call 403-910-2551 and press 6, 1

What can I call about? Advice for medical conditions in pregnancy, including:

- Hypertensive disorders
 - Heart disease
 - Venous thromboembolism
 - Gastrointestinal disease
 - Renal disease
 - Thrombocytopenia
-

WOMEN'S HEALTH > Obstetrics Gynecology

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'WOMEN'S HEALTH' before clicking 'Obstetrics Gynecology' or call 403-910-2551 and press 6, 2

What can I call about? Non-urgent advice related to the following concerns:

- Early pregnancy concerns, including hyperemesis gravidarum and hypertension
- Fibroids

- Irregular menses
- Interpreting imaging results
- Menopausal symptoms, treatment
- Menstrual disorders, including heavy bleeding and anemia
- Ovarian cysts
- Post-menopausal bleeding
- Venous disease

WOMEN'S HEALTH > Maternal Fetal Medicine

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'WOMEN'S HEALTH' before clicking 'Maternal Fetal Medicine' or call 403-910-2551 and press 6, 4

What can I call about? Non-urgent advice related to (but not limited to) the following concerns:

- High-risk obstetric patients in early pregnancy, including medications in pregnancy
- Navigating the care of pregnant women with complex maternal or fetal issues
- Interpreting abnormal fetal imaging or bloodwork results
- Prenatal screening or diagnosis
- Fetal anomaly
- Abnormalities ultrasound fetal assessment
- Multiple gestation
- Hypertensive disorders in pregnancy
- Other medical conditions in pregnancy
- Previous pregnancy complications or stillbirth
- Pre-conception planning for high-risk women
- General questions regarding the risks of COVID in pregnancy (for infected or recovered pregnant women).
- Management of COVID-positive pregnant women who have other maternal, fetal, or obstetrical complications.
- Timing / urgency and location of obstetrical imaging for COVID-positive pregnant women.

Anything to note? For patients requiring urgent (or inpatient) MFM consultation and/or imaging, please contact the MFM physician on-call through FMC switchboard (403-8944-1110), available 24 hours daily.

WOMEN'S HEALTH > MFM Pandemic Support

How to request a call: Go to specialistlink.ca and hover over 'WOMEN'S HEALTH' before clicking 'MFM Pandemic Support' or call 403-910-2551 and press 8, 3

What can I call about? Non-urgent advice related to (but not limited to) the following concerns:

- General questions regarding the risks of COVID in pregnancy (for infected or recovered pregnant women).
- Management of COVID-positive pregnant women who have other maternal, fetal, or obstetrical complications.
- Timing / urgency and location of obstetrical imaging for COVID-positive pregnant women.
- Questions about referral of patients to the MFM COVID prenatal clinic.

- Questions related to non-urgent maternal fetal medicine.

Anything to note? For patients requiring urgent (or inpatient) MFM consultation and/or imaging, please contact the MFM physician on-call through FMC switchboard (403-8944-1110), available 24 hours daily.

Pathway: Download the [COVID-19 primary care adult pathway](#) from specialistlink.ca.

Contact us: If specialists or family physicians have comments or questions about this guide or Specialist LINK services, please email us at specialistlink@cfpcn.ca.