### **How to Know When to Ask for an In-Person Visit**

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Telehealth has made healthcare incredibly convenient, allowing us to see a doctor from anywhere. However, even the best telehealth doctors will sometimes need to redirect a patient to an in-person visit. This isn't a sign of failure—it's a sign of good medicine.

This guide is designed to empower you with the knowledge to work collaboratively with your doctor, helping you recognise the signs and symptoms that always warrant a physical examination. By understanding these "red flags," you can help ensure your safety and receive the most appropriate care for your needs.

### **1. The Trusting Partnership: Why a Doctor Might Redirect You**

A key principle of ethical telehealth is knowing its limits. When a doctor advises you to see someone in person, it's not because they can't help; it's because they want to help you as safely and thoroughly as possible. A referral for an in-person visit is an act of clinical caution—a sign of a good, responsible doctor who is prioritising your best interests above all else. This builds a trusting partnership and ensures that your health is always the number one concern.

### **2. Recognising the Red Flags: When In-Person is the Only Way**

While telehealth is perfect for routine check-ups and follow-ups, certain symptoms and conditions unequivocally demand a physical, hands-on assessment. Always head to an in-person clinic or an emergency department for:

* **Unexplained Pain:** If you have persistent or severe pain, particularly in your chest or abdomen, a doctor needs to physically examine you. They need to feel for tenderness, swelling, or masses that simply cannot be assessed remotely.
* **New Lumps or Masses:** Any new or unexplained lump, bump, or mass on your body should be physically examined. A doctor needs to feel its texture, size, and location to make a proper diagnosis.
* **Severe Acute Symptoms:** This is an emergency. If you are experiencing sudden, severe chest pain, acute shortness of breath, heavy bleeding, or symptoms like sudden paralysis or numbness, you should **call 000 immediately**. Telehealth is not a substitute for emergency care.
* **Complex Skin Issues:** While a visible rash or a small skin irritation might be suitable for a video consult, complex skin lesions, rapidly changing moles, or any skin condition that requires a close, tactile inspection warrants an in-person visit.
* **Suspected Injuries:** If you have a suspected fracture, a serious cut requiring stitches, or a significant head injury, a physical examination and often an X-ray or other imaging is essential for proper diagnosis and treatment.

### **3. The Doctor’s Missing Touch: Why a Physical Exam Matters**

A physical exam isn’t just a formality. It’s a crucial diagnostic tool that provides a doctor with information that is impossible to get remotely. Here are a few key things that a doctor can only do in person:

* **Palpation:** This is the act of feeling with hands. A doctor uses palpation to check for tenderness, swelling, masses, or fluid accumulation in areas like your abdomen, joints, or neck.
* **Auscultation:** Using a stethoscope, a doctor listens to your heart, lungs, and bowels. They can detect abnormal rhythms, breathing sounds, or other signs of illness that are inaudible over a phone or video call.
* **Tactile Assessment:** Feeling a patient's skin for temperature, texture, or turgor (elasticity) can provide critical clues about hydration, circulation, or infection.
* **Instrument Use:** Tools like an otoscope (for ears) or an ophthalmoscope (for eyes) are impossible to use remotely and are essential for diagnosing many common conditions.

These elements are fundamental to good medical practice and explain why a responsible doctor will always refer you for a physical examination when necessary.

### **4. Communicating Your Needs: Tips for a Seamless Redirect**

Working with your telehealth doctor is a collaboration. You are an essential part of the diagnostic process. Here’s how to communicate effectively to ensure you get the care you need:

* **Be Clear and Direct:** Don't hesitate to clearly describe your symptoms. Use descriptive language for pain or discomfort, such as "sharp," "dull," "comes and goes," or "throbbing."
* **Ask Your Doctor:** If you are concerned that a physical examination is needed, you can say so. A good doctor will welcome your input and explain their clinical reasoning for a referral. You can say something like, "Doctor, I'm concerned about this lump. Would it be better if you checked it in person?"
* **Trust the Referral:** When your doctor recommends an in-person visit, see it as a positive step. It means they’ve correctly assessed the limitations of telehealth and are guiding you to the best possible care pathway.

### **5. The Seamless Hybrid Model: The Future of Your Care**

The most effective model of modern healthcare is not a choice between telehealth and in-person care. It's a **hybrid model** that uses both for what they do best.

Telehealth excels at convenient routine check-ins, medication reviews, and follow-ups. In-person care remains the gold standard for physical examinations, procedures, and complex diagnoses. A referral from a telehealth doctor is not an inconvenience; it's a planned step in a coordinated care journey. By embracing this hybrid model, you get the best of both worlds: the efficiency of technology and the vital clinical depth of a hands-on doctor.

**Conclusion**

Knowing when to ask for an in-person visit is a key skill for navigating modern healthcare. By understanding the "red flags" and the vital role of a physical exam, you can work collaboratively with your doctor to ensure your safety and receive the highest quality of care. The future of healthcare is about leveraging technology responsibly, and you, the patient, are at the heart of that.

### **Need a Consult? Experience Seamless Care with Medicly**

Medicly connects you with trusted Australian GPs who are experts in providing a hybrid model of care. Our doctors are committed to knowing the limits of telehealth and will always advise an in-person visit when it is in your best interest.

[**[Book Your Medicly Telehealth Consult Now!]**](https://www.google.com/search?q=YOUR_MEDICLY_BOOKING_PAGE_LINK_HERE)

### **For the Full Telehealth Guide**

Want to learn more about the big picture of telehealth in Australia, including costs, privacy, and how it's changing healthcare for good? **Download the complete "Ultimate Guide to Telehealth in Australia" in PDF format.**

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### **SEO Meta Data and Instructions**

### **1. Meta Data for Implementation**

* **Meta Title:** Telehealth vs. In-Person: How to Know When You Need a Doctor's Touch
  + **Rationale:** This title presents a clear choice ("Telehealth vs. In-Person") that directly addresses the user's primary concern. The phrase "How to Know" makes it a practical guide, and "a Doctor's Touch" is a powerful, human-centric way to convey the need for a physical examination. It’s also optimized for keywords like "telehealth," "in-person visit," and "doctor's touch."
* **Meta Description:** Telehealth is great, but some symptoms need a physical exam. Learn the "red flags" that require an in-person visit, from severe pain to new lumps. A guide to working with your doctor for the best care.
  + **Rationale:** This description is concise and immediately tells the user what they will learn. It uses key phrases like "physical exam," "red flags," and "in-person visit." It focuses on empowering the patient and highlights the collaborative nature of care, which builds trust and encourages clicks.

### **2. On-Page SEO Instructions**

* **Primary Keyword:** "in-person visit"
* **Secondary Keywords:** "telehealth vs in-person," "physical exam," "telehealth red flags," "telehealth limitations"
* **Content Optimization Checklist:**
  + **Keyword Placement:** The primary keyword "in-person visit" and its variations are effectively used throughout the blog post, especially in headings and the introduction. Secondary keywords are also well-integrated.
  + **Header Tags (H2, H3):** The current heading structure is excellent. The main sections (**H2**) like "Recognising the Red Flags" and "The Doctor's Missing Touch" clearly signpost the content. The use of sub-bullets and clear formatting makes the content scannable for both users and search engines.
  + **Internal Linking:**
    - The call to action, **[Book Your Medicly Telehealth Consult Now!]**, should link to your main telehealth booking page.
    - The phrase **[Click Here to Download Your FREE Telehealth E-Book!]** should link to the e-book's landing page or the PDF file.
    - Consider linking phrases like "incredibly convenient" to the "Telehealth Prep Kit" blog post to keep users on your site and provide them with more valuable information.
  + **External Linking:** No external links are strictly required, as this post is based on professional medical judgment rather than specific external data.
  + **Image Alt Text:** If you add an image, such as a graphic of a physical exam vs. a telehealth consult, use descriptive alt text. For example: <img src="in-person-vs-telehealth.jpg" alt="A doctor performing a physical exam on a patient compared to a virtual consult on a laptop">.
  + **Content Readability:** The clear, direct language and logical structure make this content highly readable. The use of bolded text and bullet points effectively highlights key information, which is great for user experience and engagement—a positive ranking signal for search engines.