

THE COMPANION SERIES • PRINTABLE

New Diagnosis Checklist

A one-page guide for your next appointment.

BEFORE YOU WALK IN — 5 MINUTES

- ☐ Write the diagnosis down exactly — spelling matters.
- ☐ Bring someone with you, or ask to record on your phone.
- ☐ Put your top 3 questions at the top of the page.
- ☐ List medications, supplements, and past surgeries.

Takeaway: Five minutes with a pen changes what the next fifteen are worth.

UNDERSTAND THE DIAGNOSIS

- ☐ Full name of the condition — and how it's spelled.
- ☐ How was it confirmed? Definitive or preliminary?
- ☐ Stage, subtype, grade, or variant?
- ☐ How common is it, and how often does this clinic treat it?
- ☐ Anything unusual about my case?

Takeaway: Get the name, confirmation, and subtype in writing before moving on.

WHAT COMES NEXT

- ☐ All treatment options — effectiveness, side effects, recovery.
- ☐ Your recommendation, and why over the others?
- ☐ What happens if we wait or do nothing?
- ☐ How urgent — days or weeks to decide?
- ☐ Can you help me get records for a second opinion?
- ☐ Any clinical trials or newer treatments to know about?

Takeaway: You're entitled to the full menu, not just the special.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- ☐ Timeline — days, weeks, months?
- ☐ Symptoms that mean CALL NOW vs. wait for next visit.
- ☐ How will we know treatment is working, and when?
- ☐ Daily life during treatment — work, driving, energy?
- ☐ Financial, emotional, and logistical support available?

Takeaway: Ask for a rough map of the next 30, 90, and 365 days.

IF THE DIAGNOSIS IS CANCER — ASK ALSO

- ☐ Type, exact location, stage, and grade.
- ☐ Has it spread? What tests were used to check?
- ☐ Markers or mutations (ER/PR/HER2, EGFR/ALK, KRAS)?
- ☐ Goal of treatment — cure, control, or comfort?
- ☐ Order — surgery, chemo, radiation, targeted, immunotherapy?
- ☐ Nurse navigator or patient advocate for my case?

Takeaway: Stage, grade, spread, and markers change almost every downstream decision.

FIRST 48 HOURS AFTER

- ☐ Write down what you heard within an hour.
- ☐ Request visit notes and test results from the portal.
- ☐ Start a running follow-up questions list.
- ☐ Tell one or two people you trust.
- ☐ Give yourself permission to feel it.

Takeaway: The appointment ends, but the diagnosis doesn't.