

THE COMPANION SERIES • PRINTABLE

Doctor Appointment Checklist

What to write down before you go, what to ask in the room, what to confirm before you leave.

BEFORE YOU GO

- ☐ Write the reason for this visit in one sentence.
- ☐ List your top 3 questions — in priority order.
- ☐ Update the med list: name, dose, why you take it.
- ☐ Note new symptoms — when they started, how often.
- ☐ Gather recent test results, imaging, and reports.
- ☐ Bring insurance card, ID, and a pen.
- ☐ Ask a family member to come or join by phone.

Takeaway: The 15 minutes with your doctor are worth more if you spend 15 minutes preparing.

SYMPTOMS TO DESCRIBE CLEARLY

- ☐ When did it start? What makes it better or worse?
- ☐ How often — daily, weekly, only at night?
- ☐ Rate the intensity (1–10) and how it changes.
- ☐ What have you already tried? Did it help?
- ☐ How is it affecting sleep, work, or mood?

Takeaway: Doctors act on specifics. Vague symptoms get vague answers.

ASK ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

- ☐ What is the exact name of what I have?
- ☐ What's causing it — and what isn't?
- ☐ How serious is it, and how urgent?
- ☐ What tests do I need, and what will they tell us?
- ☐ What are the possible outcomes, best to worst?

Takeaway: If you can't repeat it back in your own words, ask again.

ASK ABOUT TREATMENT

- ☐ What are all my options — including doing nothing?
- ☐ Which do you recommend, and why?
- ☐ What are the side effects and how long do they last?
- ☐ How soon should I decide? What if I wait a week?
- ☐ Are there newer treatments or clinical trials?
- ☐ Would a second opinion be reasonable here?

Takeaway: You're allowed to hear every option before you pick one.

ASK ABOUT DAILY LIFE

- ☐ What can I eat, drink, or do — and what should I avoid?
- ☐ Will this affect work, driving, exercise, or sleep?
- ☐ What symptoms mean CALL NOW vs. wait it out?
- ☐ When will I feel a change — days, weeks, months?
- ☐ How will we know it's working?

Takeaway: A treatment plan you can't live with isn't a plan.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE ROOM

- ☐ Repeat the plan back in your own words.
- ☐ Confirm next steps: tests, referrals, prescriptions.
- ☐ Get the follow-up date on the calendar today.
- ☐ Ask how to reach the office with questions.
- ☐ Request visit notes and results through the portal.

Takeaway: The best appointment ends with no ambiguity about what happens next.

WITHIN 24 HOURS

- ☐ Write down what the doctor actually said.
- ☐ Fill prescriptions and schedule any tests.
- ☐ Share the plan with one person you trust.
- ☐ Add new questions to your running list.

Takeaway: Memory fades fast. Notes don't.