

# Taking Notes

A free 14-page planner for people having cancer appointments. This page is for whoever is deciding whether to put it in a clinic folder.

## WHAT IT IS

Mostly blank pages with prompts: the basics written down once, three questions to bring, what changed since the last visit, medicines, what was said, a week of side effects, who is who, and who to call. One page carries ten questions to ask if a clinical trial is offered, and one page has no prompts at all. The last page is tabs and stickers to cut out.

## WHY

Between 40 and 80 percent of the medical information we give is forgotten immediately, and close to half of what patients do remember is remembered incorrectly (Kessels, J R Soc Med 2003;96:219-222).

Consent documents are not closing that gap either: across 5,239 consent forms on ClinicalTrials.gov the mean reading level was just under eleventh grade, with 91 percent above the eighth-grade level review boards generally ask for (J Clin Transl Sci 2024). A planner does not fix either problem. It gives the patient somewhere to put what they were told, and it gives you a patient who arrives with their questions already written down.

## USING IT IN CLINIC

1. **Give it at the first visit**, before the appointment where decisions get made, so pages 3 to 5 are already filled in when they arrive.
2. **Point at page 4**. "Write your three questions there and bring it back." It takes ten seconds to say and it changes what the next visit looks like.
3. **Fill in page 11 with them**. It asks for your service's own numbers and your own thresholds, deliberately, because it does not state a temperature. Folding a tab over it takes a minute and means they can find it at two in the morning.
4. **Offer page 9 when a trial comes up**. The ten questions are already written, so a patient who cannot think of anything in the room can hand it over instead.

**Nothing in it needs crediting back to us and nothing needs permission.** Print it, photocopy it, put your own service's sticker on page 11. There is no cost and there will not be one.

## GET IT

Download and print from  
[protocolandpeople.org/planner.html](https://protocolandpeople.org/planner.html)  
14 pages, half US Letter, two to a sheet.

## TELL US WHAT IS MISSING

If there is a page your patients would use that is not in here, say so and it gets added.  
[info@protocolandpeople.org](mailto:info@protocolandpeople.org)

