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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 comes up, 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. **Point to 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
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

Educational only. Not medical advice.