

The Doctor's Office Prep Kit: Your Visit, Your Terms

An intake-notes template, a question list, and a no-shame script for the appointment you've been dreading

Why This Kit Exists

Doctor's offices are not neutral territory. They're loud, bright, rushed, and full of forms designed for people who feel fine. If you've ever left an appointment remembering everything you meant to say – the question you forgot, the symptom you undersold, the fear you swallowed – this kit is for you. It does not fix the system. It gives you a handhold inside it.

The Intake Template

The night before or in the waiting room, fill this in. Short sentences. Fragments are fine. This is a crib sheet, not a formal document.

- The main reason I'm here: one sentence, no self-editing
- When it started: what was happening in your life around then
- What it feels like: your words, not medical words
- What makes it worse / better: even if it's just 'worse at night'
- What I've already tried: anything, even if it didn't work
- What I need from this visit: a test, a referral, a medication review, a clear answer – or just to feel heard

8 Questions to Ask Before You Leave

You're allowed to ask questions. You're allowed to take up the time you were given.

- **"What are you checking for?"**
- **"What would that mean if it's positive / negative?"**
- **"What's the plan if this doesn't work?"**
- **"What should I call if this gets worse?"**
- **"Can you write that down for me?"**
- **"Do I need to come back, and when?"**
- **"What can I stop worrying about?"**
- **"What did you see or hear that I didn't ask?"**

Sensory Prep

The office is already doing its sensory worst. Prep for your own nervous system, not for politeness.

- **Headphones or earplugs for the waiting room**
- **Sunglasses if the lights are too bright**
- **A water bottle and a snack – appointments run late**
- **One comfort item with a texture you like**
- **Your notes, printed or on your phone, where you can actually see them**

When They Rush You

I get that you're busy. I need to make sure I actually hear this. Can we slow down for one moment?

When You Freeze

My brain stops working in appointments. I wrote things down so I wouldn't forget. Can I read them?

When the Plan Feels Too Big

I need a plan I can follow when I'm not at my best. What's the easiest version of the next step?

When It Doesn't Stick

That made sense in here. I'm not sure I'll remember it out there. Can you put it in writing?

The Only Rule

You don't have to be a good patient. You have to be a patient who walks out knowing more than they walked in with. Consider bringing someone you trust, if that's an option – a hand in the waiting room is a form of accessibility. And if you're in crisis or need urgent support, please reach out to a professional or a crisis line in your country. You deserve real help, not just a strategy for surviving the lobby.

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