

WORKSHEET 5

Doctor Discussion & Self-Advocacy Guide

Bring your map to the appointment. Walk in prepared. Walk out with clarity.

How your doctor thinks: They gather information, develop a list of possible diagnoses, then systematically eliminate possibilities until the most likely answer remains. They follow a structured map. You do not need to know everything on that map — but you need to bring your own.

PART 1 — BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

What is the main reason you are going in today?

Be as specific as possible. Bring this written down.

What do you want to walk out of this appointment knowing or having?

Your outcome for the visit. This is your destination for today.

What concerns you most that you want to make sure gets addressed?

PART 2 — QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

Most people never ask these. Check the ones you want to bring to your next appointment.

- What is this condition actually doing in my body?
Understanding the mechanism, not just the label.
- What happens if we leave it untreated? What is the natural progression?
Know the stakes before deciding on a plan.
- What are all the treatment options available to me?
There is almost always more than one path.
- What are the complications and risks of the treatment itself?
Every treatment has a risk profile. Ask for it.
- What other diagnoses have been considered — including less common ones?
Doctors follow probability. Sometimes uncommon gets missed.

- How will we know if the treatment is working? What are we monitoring?

Define what success looks like before you start.

- Are there lifestyle changes that could support or replace treatment?

Your daily habits are part of the treatment plan.

- When should I follow up, and what should I watch for in between?

Close the loop so you know what comes next.

PART 3 — AFTER THE APPOINTMENT

What did I learn today that I did not know before?

What are my next steps — and by when?

Prescription to fill, referral to follow up on, test to schedule, habit to start.

What question did I leave with that I still need answered?

Bring this to your next visit or message through the patient portal.

You are the world's leading expert on your own life. Walk in knowing that. Walk out with a plan.
