

Medical Journal Instructions

Welcome to The Medical Journal!

I've created this Medical Journal as a tool for you to use as you build your caregiving experience. Whether short or long-term, whether your patient is expected to recover, to live with a chronic condition for some time, or is suffering from a terminal disease, this book is designed to make your caregiving experience more organized and less stressful.

All you need to do is fill the forms out, and then take The Medical Journal with you to all medical appointments. The idea is to enable you to keep all vital medical information in one place so it's easily found when you need it. Everything you need is here, from the patient's information and health history to a calendar for tracking appointments and treatments, to a variety of lists so that you know what drugs and supplements are being taken. I've also included a list of questions for you to ask about drugs as they're prescribed, and a list of side effects for you to discuss in detail with your loved one's doctors.

In addition to the forms, there are pages for the physicians to fill in for the treatment summaries and various test results (more likely they will give you a copy that you can include). Sometimes the results will come on a CD, so that's why the sleeve for holding them is already in your Medical Journal notebook.

The pages at the end of the journal are designed for you to keep your own records:

Page 17 is where you can record notes during your loved one's medical appointments;

Page 18 is where you and the patient can record your observations and questions between appointments;

Page 19 is designed for you, the caregiver. Here you can keep your "Yeah, but..." List, your Hope List, your Gratitude Journal, and any miscellaneous information, such as names of phone numbers of people who offer to help you and your patient.

Please do not use any of the pages in The Medical Journal for your personal journal in which you write out your feelings about your caregiving assignment. Those thoughts and feelings need to go into a journal that is private and secure where they won't be seen by anyone but you.

Be sure to keep The Medical Journal updated! If you need more pages, the file labeled "Build an Addition" has them all. Every page listed in The Medical Journal Contents can be found in Build an Addition, with the exception of the title page, the list of questions about drugs and the list of side effects. Please notice that extra blank Medical Journal Calendar pages are in a file separate from Build an Addition. Be sure to keep at least three months of present and future calendar pages in your journal so that you can note medical appointments well into the future. Don't toss out those calendar pages after that month has passed. You may need to refer back to dates of appointments, treatments, hospitalizations, etc. Keep them in place in the journal and put the new months on top of them. If your notebook becomes too crowded, create a separate archive notebook to hold the past months of calendar pages.

I hope the forms are self-explanatory. If you have questions or concerns about them, please contact me at caregivingcoach@ymail.com. Further, I hope that you will find this journal as indispensable as a road map as you and your loved one make this medical journey together.

Blessings,
Joanne