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Use and Enjoy the
Get Well Journal Report

**Part A: Start Preparing for Your
Next Doctor Visit Now**

**Part B: Why you should keep a detailed...
“Get Well Journal”**

Print Out a personal copy of the
“Get Well Journal”

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A. Start Preparing for Your Next Doctor Visit Now

If you're sick and seek your doctor's care... if you're running into his office at the last minute hoping to get some help and advice... if you're too sick to do anything more than drag yourself through the door, how and why should you prepare for the appointment? This is a critical issue and not one that too many people realize its importance until they're in a total jam.

What to do

First off, there are certain things that you can do to make your doctor visit run smoothly and efficiently:

Go prepared. Plan ahead of time
Keep good records from one visit to the next

For most of us such a daunting task is grounds for a nap or at least an aspirin. Who has time to plan? Who even thinks about keeping good records? Who can manage the task?

You. You have to do this because you're the one who will suffer if this process is neglected. And you are the one who will benefit from it being done (even half-done) correctly.

Why should you make the effort?

Because, as you go into the doctor's office either incoherently sick or just a little off-kilter, you'll have an excellent chance of achieving good results and having a positive experience, if you're prepared for the visit ahead of time.

Prepared with:

Notes of how you've been (Symptoms, onset date, activities, daily pain scale, sleep quality, quantity, etc.),
How your current medicines are affecting you (Results? Problems? Side effects?),
What are your health needs (Upcoming plans? Major stressors? Life changes?),
And any previous records (laboratory reports, x-rays, CT scans, MRI scans, PET scans, etc.) taken by other professionals, if this doctor may need to see them. (Note: if he has a set of these records, obviously you don't need to carry them around with you. If he doesn't have them but needs them to refer to, consider getting him a copy made.)

This preparedness goes a long way if you need organized records and documentation for a follow-up medical professional, your health insurance company, or if you're trying to put together a reliable and effective Social Security Disability record case file to prove that you qualify for Social Security, Supplemental Security Income disability or disability with a private insurer.

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B. Why you should keep a detailed... “Get Well Journal”

If you're really ill, there can be great benefits in writing out your "journey." Why, you ask? Why should you spend the time and effort keeping a diary about such a really personal, really tough time in your life?

Think of it this way. Although there are some benefits to writing down your frustrations and pain of all types (mental and emotional therapeutic benefits), what I'm suggesting is slightly different in nature and has a different guided purpose. I suggest that you write out the entire process of what you're going through paying specific attention to your health needs and what kind of helpful answers you find. The goodies that will manifest from your endeavor will absolutely astound you. They include:

- **discovering** specific *healing* resources that you didn't know existed before
- **documenting** your opinions of what you tried, including dates of when you made the discovery
- **noting** how you proceeded with specific courses of action
- **remembering** the results that you found (good and bad, including why -and- how you made your decisions)
- **finding** helpful people and professionals, and finally
- **taking** advantage of resources that you discover, including books, CDs, DVDs and Internet website resources

The possibilities of *what* you record are only restricted by your imagination, initiative and the end result that you hope to achieve. Just know that by paying attention to your recovery/ your healing journey from *invalid* to *well person* and the act of writing down everything, you will be following in the footsteps of many people who have found their way out of the deep, dark hole known as *being sick* or *suffering with chronic illness*.

Everyone starts at square one in the process of getting well. Your **Get Well Journal** is an excellent place to begin. Your scribbles and ramblings within its pages only have to suit you. They easily can become a most valuable resource, one of notes, specific data and recorded history-- your history of regaining your health. Consider that once you write down this information, it's like having a friend, a validating friend to walk with you through your journey. A friend without judgment, a friend who is always ready to listen and a friend who never forgets anything! How good is that? Pretty darned good!

There are additional reasons why this written exercise can serve you well. One of the most obvious is it will enable you to keep up with pertinent facts about what you're going through. Doctors and insurance companies like to know *where*, *when*, *how* and *what*. Often with so much fatigue and brain fog, expecting yourself to remember details can be a near impossibility. Your notes can serve as your history. On days when you don't feel like doing anything else, scribble short notes that you can expand upon later and mention all of your symptoms that day including their severity. Later on you will be able to reflect upon your rough time with more perspective.

When it's time to see your doctor, you'll be able to sit down with your reference book, look at what has transpired since your last visit, evaluate any symptom changes and note things like test results and any therapies, supplements or new drugs that you tried. In short, you'll have a cheat sheet and you won't have to tax your brains to remember the details. (If necessary put sticky notes in the margins of your book. Have them hang out beyond the edge indicating the points that you want to reference that day.

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If you have time before the visit, organize the points reflected in these notes and write or type out a more legible, easier to understand list just for the doctor. I found great value in such a resource because:

1. It took the pressure off me to have to remember everything (often by the time I got in to see the doctor, I was exhausted and couldn't think!), and...

My doctor put a lot of validity into my claims of how I felt *because* I had documented them.

*Another important point before you see your doctor, write out a specific list of symptoms or problems that you want to address during your visit. If you're really getting into this and have done a good job, you should be able to take your points directly from the pages of your **Get Well Journal**. Such a doctor visit list will keep you organized and help you make the best use of the precious-few minutes in his office. Otherwise, you might get off track and forget to mention half of the things that you wanted to cover!

The doctor should be obliged to keep such notes as part of your historical medical records. That alone can go a long way toward keeping him and you focused on your healthcare needs, plus the note serves as a valid, dated record for insurance and disability claims, including a Social Security Disability claim! Such a valuable asset, this list of yours!

Now start keeping your valuable record book today. Get in charge of your healthcare and stay that way. If you need help in getting organized, ask for it. (See the printable **Get Well Journal** enclosed in this document. We made it just for you! Right click on it to save to your hard drive, or click normally and print you a copy.)

Taking the step of starting your own journal is very important.

Empower yourself even if you feel anything but powerful. Do this for you. As you investigate any medical professional or newly discovered therapy, be sure to keep good notes.

A side benefit for doing this... is that the material you collect may help someone else.

Let's say your best friend mentions that she has an appointment with a specific doctor or therapist. You remember the name, but can't recall all of the details of whether you had a good or bad experience with him, his staff, the physical location of the office, the therapies recommended, the prescription drugs, etc. Your notes can be just the thing to jog your memory and enable you to offer some special help to your friend. You can refer to your book.

***A hint for all Support Group Leaders:** "I used my personal book as a resource tool for the Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome support group that I led for five years. I met many skilled professionals in my capacity as leader. I kept copious notes that came in handy for me and for them. Because we all need help from time to time, someone who has "been there and done that" carries a lot of weight. Every one of us likes to know what we're getting into before we walk a scary, time-consuming and possibly expensive path alone. When the occasion arises when you can help someone else, you keeping your record book will make you feel good. This is an easy, no-brainer way to lend a helping hand."

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This is the personal Get Well Journal of...

Date/ Year

Here's what's important to me: _____

If this book gets lost, I need it back. It's very important!

Please return to:

Or phone me at _____ or _____

-OR-

E-mail me at: _____

Thanks,

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Get Well Journal of: _____

Date: _____ **Time of Day** _____

Symptom: (describe) _____

Pain Scale (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How do I feel?

How is this presenting itself?

Is the cause evident?

Have I had this before?

Did this symptom come about as the result of activity or inactivity?

What I am doing about it? Action needed?

Remedies/ Prescription Drugs:

NOTES:

******I may need to tell my health practitioner about this because:**

Get Well Journal of: _____

Today's Thoughts:

What have I discovered? **What** actions do I need to take?

Motivations (Why am I motivated)?

Method (How will I make this work)?

When do I need to do **What**?

Source: _____

*If I need to ask for assistance or help, "**Who**" can I call?

Name _____ **Phone** _____

E-mail address _____

Physical address _____

(Directions of how to get to their home? _____

Monthly Planning:

Annual Planning:

***Bonus: If you want access to a free, lined form to extend any section of this document, go to <http://printfree.com>, the middle section of the page, Lined Papers, Back to School, and click on HTML Lined paper. I would give you the direct link, but the website does not make this facility available for such a purpose. However, I really do like this website because it has all kinds of useful stuff that is free! Enjoy.**

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Cinda Crawford's *Get Well Journal Report*

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***If you need to reach me or any of my staff at the Health Matters Show or Get Well Health, feel free to call 1- (214) 615-5405, ext. 4654 and leave a message or e-mail me at info@healthmattersshow.com.**

***If I can answer any question about helping you Get Well, call me. I care, I am accessible and I'll do everything in my power to help you improve your health!**

Thanks, Cinda Crawford