PATIENT–PROVIDER FORUM NIGERIA

THE SMART PATIENT CONSULTATION CHECKLIST

A practical guide to help you prepare for your appointment, take part in the conversation and leave with a clearer understanding of your care.

Your appointment is a conversation. You do not need to know all the medical answers. You do have a role in sharing what you are experiencing, asking questions and making sure you understand the plan.

1. BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

- ■ I have written down my main symptoms or concerns.
- ■ I can explain when the problem started and how it has changed.
- ■ I have noted anything that makes it better or worse.
- ■ I have brought relevant previous test results, reports or medical records.
- ■ I have a list of the medicines I take, including doses if known.
- ■ I have noted any allergies or previous reactions to medicines.
- ■ I have thought about the questions I want to ask.

2. DURING THE CONSULTATION

- ■ Have I fully described my symptoms, even if they seem small or embarrassing?
- ■ Have I explained how the problem affects my daily life?
- ■ Was I examined when a physical examination was needed?
- ■ Were my test results reviewed and explained in terms I understand?
- ■ Do I understand what condition or problem is being considered or treated?
- ■ Have I told the doctor about my current medicines, allergies and relevant medical history?
- ■ Have I had the opportunity to ask the questions that matter to me?

3. BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- ■ Do I understand what I am being treated for, or what the next step is to find out?
- ■ Do I know the name and purpose of each medicine prescribed?
- ■ Do I know how and when to take each medicine, and for how long?
- ■ Have I been told about important side effects or precautions to look out for?
- ■ Do I know whether I need any further tests, and where or when to do them?
- ■ Do I know when my next appointment or follow-up should be?
- ■ Do I know what symptoms should prompt me to seek urgent medical attention?
- ■ Do I understand what I should do next?

4. MY NOTES

The main things I discussed:

My next steps:

Remember: If something is unclear, speak up. Ask the doctor to explain it another way, clarify what you heard, or write down the instructions. If you are unsure about the plan, say so before you leave.

Good healthcare is a two-way conversation. Your questions and your doctor's explanations both matter. This checklist is a prompt to support that conversation, not a test of your doctor or a substitute for professional medical advice.

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Adapted from The Smart Patient by Dr Temitope Oyetunji.