



## GP Appointment Preparation Checklist

### When You're Noticing Changes in Someone You Love

This checklist is designed to help you feel clearer, steadier, and more confident when speaking with a GP. You don't need to complete everything perfectly—use what feels helpful.

#### 1. Notice Patterns (not one-off moments)

Over time, have you noticed repeated changes rather than isolated incidents?

- Memory changes (especially recent events or conversations)
  - Changes in mood, personality, or behaviour
  - Confusion with time, place, or familiar routines (especially when driving)
  - Difficulty with everyday tasks
  - Language or communication changes
  - Withdrawal from activities or people
  - Poor judgment or unusual decisions
  - Restlessness, pacing, or sleep changes
  - Visual or spatial difficulties
  - Frequently misplacing items in unusual places
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#### 2. Write Things Down (this matters more than memory)

Over a few weeks, note what you observe in **simple, factual language**.

You don't need to analyse or diagnose—just record.

For each entry, include:

- Approximate date
- What happened (brief and factual)
- How often it has occurred
- Any changes from their usual behaviour

*(Example: "Forgot how to use the microwave—has used it daily for years.")*

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#### 3. Gather Background Information

Before the appointment, jot down:

- Current medications (including recent changes)
  - Any recent illnesses, infections, or hospital stays
  - Family history of dementia or neurological conditions
  - Changes in alcohol use, sleep, or stress levels
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#### 4. Decide How You Want the Appointment to Feel

It's okay to plan *how* you want to have this conversation.

- Do I want to speak privately with the GP first?
- Would it feel easier to email my notes ahead of time?
- What feels most respectful for my loved one right now?

*(Many people find it helpful to send written observations to the GP beforehand.)*

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#### 5. If You Email the GP in Advance (optional but powerful)

You might include:

- A brief note explaining why this is hard to discuss in front of your loved one
- Your written observations (chronological, factual, calm)
- A request for guidance on next steps, tests, or referrals

*(Advocating this way is not disloyal—it's caring.)*

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#### 6. During the Appointment

- Bring your notes (printed or on your phone)
  - Ask what the **next steps** are, even if diagnosis is not immediate
  - Ask what can be ruled out first (e.g. vitamin deficiencies, infections, medication effects)
  - Ask who to contact if symptoms change or worsen
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#### 7. After the Appointment

- Write down what was discussed
- Note any tests, referrals, or follow-up appointments
- Acknowledge yourself for taking this step

This is not an easy conversation—and you showed care by having it.

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## **A Gentle Reminder**

You do not need certainty before seeking clarity.

Trusting your observations, documenting what you notice, and asking for support is not overreacting—it is an act of love.

*This space offers guidance and resources to support carers and is designed to complement — not replace — professional care and personal support networks, through my lived experiences and acquired knowledge during my journey.*