

# You've Got a Diagnosis—Now What? A First-Step Guide for Patients & Caregivers

Getting a new diagnosis can feel overwhelming—physically, emotionally, and mentally. This guide offers clear, compassionate steps to help you process the news and take control of what comes next.

## Take a Breath

- It's okay to feel scared, confused, angry, or numb.
- Let yourself sit with the emotions—this is a big moment.
- Talk to someone you trust or seek a support group.

## Get the Facts

- Ask for written materials or a printout about your diagnosis.
- Write down the exact name and any related terms.
- Don't be afraid to ask:
  - → "Can you explain what this means in plain terms?"
  - → "What stage or type is it?"

## Clarify Next Steps

- Do you need more tests or referrals?
- Is treatment urgent, or do you have time to explore options?
- Ask:
  - → "What should I do next?"
  - → "What's the short-term and long-term plan?"

## Start Organizing

- Use a folder, binder, or digital tool to track everything.
- Keep all reports, test results, and appointment notes in one place.
- Start a question list for future visits.

# Diagnosis Action Plan

Diagnosis Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Diagnosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider/Clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes from the Appointment:

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Next Steps & Follow-ups:

- ☐ Schedule test or referral
- ☐ Start treatment discussion
- ☐ Seek second opinion (if needed)
- ☐ Research diagnosis using reliable sources

Treatment/Test Schedule:

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Personal Notes / Reflections:

How am I feeling about this? What support do I need?

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