

# Questions to Discuss With Your Doctor Before Accepting Any Prescription

You may print this, take it to your doctor, and write in their answers. Or use it in conversation to assess the depth of your provider's knowledge and how aligned they are with your long-term health, not symptom management.

## Understanding the Basics

1. What is this medication intended to do?  
*What is the symptom or lab value it targets?*
  2. Does this medication treat the root cause of my condition, or just reduce symptoms?
  3. What are the expected short-term effects of this drug on my body?  
*What will change in function or chemistry?*
  4. How does this drug work biochemically?  
*Which pathway does it act upon? Which organs, systems, or receptors?*
  5. How long has this prescription been FDA approved?
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## Risk vs. Benefit

6. How many of your own patients have taken this prescription?  
*Rough estimate is fine.*
7. Of those, about how many experienced noticeable side effects?
  - *Mild (e.g. headache, fatigue)*
  - *Moderate (e.g. GI upset, sleep disruption)*
  - *Severe (e.g. mood changes, organ symptoms, ER visits)*

8. What are the most commonly reported side effects in general population studies?
  9. What are the most serious or long-term risks, even if they're rare?
  10. Do you know if there have been any recalls or if there's been any lawsuits related to injury from this drug?
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## **Duration and Dosage**

11. How long do you anticipate I'll need to be on this medication?  
*Short term? Indefinitely?*
  12. What is the lowest dose available? What is the highest dose?
  13. What dose are you recommending I start with, and why?
  14. Will you plan to increase the dosage later? If so, based on what criteria?
  15. Are there withdrawal risks if I choose to stop this medication later? What's the tapering process like?
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## **Evidence & Outcomes**

16. Are there any independent, long-term studies showing improved health outcomes with this medication, specifically for people with my condition, at my age, or of my sex?
  17. Are there any alternatives to the medication? What are the differences?
  18. What percentage of people with my condition report significant improvement after taking this medication?
  19. What's the average time it takes for patients to notice positive results?
  20. What is the longest you've personally had a patient on this medication, and what was their outcome?
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## **Mechanism and Philosophy**

- 21. Will this medication suppress a process my body is doing on purpose?
  - 22. Does the drug create a compensatory effect that my body will later struggle to reverse or adapt to if stopped?
  - 23. If this drug works by blocking a pathway (e.g. serotonin reuptake, inflammation, histamines), what other effects might result from that blockade over time?
  - 24. Are there lab tests we can use to monitor how this drug is affecting me, like organ function, hormone levels, liver enzymes, etc.?
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## **Incentive**

- 25. How did you learn about this drug? How long have you known about it?
  - 26. How long have you been prescribing it for?
  - 27. Is there any reason you'd tell a patient not to take this?
  - 28. "Are you or your practice compensated in any way, financially or otherwise, by the manufacturer of this drug or similar products?"
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## **Long-Term Impact and Exit Plan**

- 28. What are the known long-term effects of this medication on organs such as the liver, kidneys, brain, and endocrine system?
  - 29. If I take this medication long-term, will it make my body dependent on it to function, or can I eventually heal without it?
  - 30. What would the exit strategy look like if I wanted to safely taper off this drug in the future?
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## **Alternatives and Lifestyle Considerations**

31. Are there natural alternatives, dietary, herbal, or behavioral, that could be used to support the body in lieu of the drug?
32. Have any of your patients improved from my condition without pharmaceuticals? What did they do differently?
33. If I wanted to try 30 or 60 days of lifestyle intervention before starting this drug, would you support that?