# BEFORE A FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT

When the fear starts days before you walk through the door

Sometimes the appointment itself is not the hardest part.

It is the week before it.

You notice the date approaching. You start checking your body more closely. Old memories return. Sleep gets worse. You imagine conversations that have not happened. A normal ache suddenly feels loaded.

This is not a sign that you are weak or irrational.

Follow-up can reactivate the fear that came with diagnosis and treatment, even when things have been stable.

## WHAT THE BUILD-UP CAN LOOK LIKE

- repeatedly checking the appointment date or portal
- searching symptoms you would normally ignore
- difficulty concentrating on ordinary work or conversations
- irritability or withdrawal
- trouble sleeping
- imagining bad news without new evidence
- feeling guilty because you think you should be “over this”
- avoiding making plans until the appointment is done

The aim is not to remove all fear.

It is to stop the fear taking over every hour before the appointment.

## A SIMPLE THREE-PART PLAN

**1. Separate what you know from what you fear**

What I know right now:

_____

What I am afraid might happen:

_____

Both matter. They are not the same thing.

**2. Give the appointment a container**

Choose one short time each day to write down worries or questions.

Outside that time, when your mind starts rehearsing the appointment again, you can tell yourself:

“I have written that down. I do not need to solve it right now.”

**3. Plan the day around the appointment**

Who, if anyone, is coming with me?

_____

What do I need to bring?

_____

What do I want to do afterwards?

_____

That last question matters.

Try not to leave the hours after the appointment completely empty if you know you find them difficult.

## QUESTIONS TO TAKE WITH YOU

The three things I most need clarity on are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

## WHEN SOMEONE TELLS YOU “DO NOT WORRY”

They usually mean well.

But fear is not switched off by being told not to feel it.

You can say:

“I know worrying will not change the result. I am just finding the build-up difficult.”

That is honest enough.

## IF THE WAITING IS BECOMING TOO MUCH

Tell someone.

That might be a partner, friend, GP, counsellor or member of your clinical team.

You do not need to prove that your fear is serious enough before asking for support.

## ONE THING TO REMEMBER

You do not have to live the appointment before it happens.

Today is still today.

Between Appointments™ provides lived-experience support and practical orientation. It does not replace medical care or provide individual medical advice.