How to Build a Gift List

salto health

This is for the person in treatment, and for anyone putting a list together on their behalf.

People want to help, and most of them say so. What they are waiting for is something specific. A Gift List answers that once, in a place anyone can look.

MORE ITEMS, NOT FEWER

A short list sounds considerate. In practice it leaves people out.

If there are four things on the list and four people buy them, everyone who comes next finds an empty page and no way to help. Aim for 15 to 20 items.

You are not asking for all of them. You are giving people something to choose from.

SPREAD THE PRICES

The people who want to help are not all in the same position. A coworker, a neighbor, a close friend and a group going in together all want to do something, and they have different amounts to spend.

A list with a real range gets used by all of them. A list where everything sits at about the same price can leave people out.

- Several lower-cost items
- A good number in the middle
- Larger ones, for people who want to go bigger or go in together

COVER DIFFERENT KINDS OF NEED

Lists fill up with one kind of thing without anyone meaning them to. Walk through these and see what is missing.

- Comfort and warmth
- Skin, lip and body care
- Nausea and hydration
- Head covering
- Clothing that works around a port or a drain
- Nutrition and easy food
- Something to do on long days

ADD THE UNGLAMOROUS THINGS

People buy blankets, and a good blanket is a lovely thing to receive. It is also the thing most people can picture, so it is where they land when they have nothing else to go on.

A port-accessible top, skin care for radiation, nausea support — those do not occur to someone who has not been through it. There is no way to know they matter until the list says so.

Nobody has to understand why something helps. It is on the list, so they know it is helpful.

GO BACK AND CHANGE IT

A Gift List is not a one-time task. Look at it every few weeks. Two things change.

What is getting used. If something is working, add more of it. Running out of the one thing that helps makes for a hard week.

What is needed at all. Side effects shift as treatment goes on, and so does what helps. Take off what is no longer useful and put on what is.

SENDING THE LINK

The hardest part is often the sending. Wording that works:

For a text or group chat

> "A few people have asked what would help. I put a list here: [link]. No pressure at all, and anything on it is genuinely useful."

For a post

> "Thank you to everyone who has asked how to help. It has meant a lot. I put together a list of things that are useful right now: [link]. If you would rather do something else, that is welcome too."

If you are setting one up for someone else

> "[Name] has a lot going on right now, so I put together a list of things that would help: [link]. Anything on it goes straight to them."

> **You are not asking for a gift. You are answering a question that has already been asked.**

THE LIST IS READY WHEN

- [ ] There are at least 15 items on it
- [ ] There is something for a smaller budget and something for a larger one
- [ ] More than two kinds of need are covered
- [ ] The practical basics are on there, not only the nice things
- [ ] You have looked at it in the last month

Every treatment plan is different. This is a guide to building a list, not medical guidance. Your care team can tell you what is right for your situation.