**Pertinent Positives and Negatives Instructions:** This is an exercise to reinforce recognizing and using pertinent findings in thinking critically about your cases.

Both pertinent positives and pertinent negatives are included within the **HPI and physical exam**, not a separate section of the chart. By their very presence, it indicates that you are actively considering more than one possible diagnoses.

1. List a minimum of three differential diagnoses if possible.  
   **Note: To help build your critical thinking:**
   a. Each diagnosis should be a reasonable diagnosis to consider based on the information you gathered.
   b. Include life or limb threatening diagnoses if appropriate to the case.
   c. Include common diagnoses.
   d. Avoid including highly unlikely diagnoses just to include something.
   e. Avoid including very rare diagnoses, “zebras,” unless you truly think this diagnosis may be a possibility.

2. Under each diagnosis in the differential, please list pertinent positives and pertinent negative findings to support your thought process. Obtain these pertinent findings from both the history and physical exam you performed. See example below:

   **Example:** Chest Pain for one day  
   Differential diagnosis #1 – acute coronary syndrome  
   Pertinent positives – substernal, radiation to neck, family history of CAD  
   Pertinent negatives – non-exertional, no diaphoresis, not relieved with rest  
   Differential diagnosis #2 – pericarditis  
   Pertinent positives – relieved by leaning forward, recent URI  
   Pertinent negatives – no pericardial friction rub on exam  
   Differential diagnosis #3 – GERD  
   Pertinent positives – worse lying down, acid taste in mouth  
   Pertinent negatives – no association with eating

*Recall that a well-written HPI and physical exam includes both pertinent positives and pertinent negatives. By their very presence, it indicates that you were actively thinking and considering more than one possible diagnosis.*

*Form provided on next page*
Pertinent Positives and Negatives:

Chief Concern of Patient: ________________________________

Differential Diagnoses and Pertinent Positives and Negatives:

1. _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
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3. _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
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Additional:

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