

**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*

**Student Name:**

**H&P #**

**Facilitator Name:**

**Pertinent Positives and Negatives:**

**Chief Concern of Patient:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Differential Diagnoses and Pertinent Positives and Negatives:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Additional:**

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