

# Transitions: A Guide to Getting Older and Changing Health Care Providers

Transitions are times when changes in your life occur. Moving toward adulthood is a time of major transitions. This can mean:

- taking on new challenges
- doing more things on your own
- having more choices
- gaining a new sense of freedom and independence
- taking on more responsibility

Getting older means your health care needs may change too. Eventually, you will need adult-centered care that can focus on meeting the variety of needs adults have. The people who know you at your health care facility will help you when the time comes to transfer care to adult doctors. They want to help you get the services and treatment that are best for you.

Taking steps to move toward adult health care:

1. Start early - Plan ahead!
2. Know how to explain your health care needs. Make a list of all the things you need to keep yourself healthy.
3. Keep a record of your appointments, important medical history, phone numbers of doctors and your medications.
4. Begin to make your own medical appointments.
5. Write down questions for your doctor or nurse practitioner before your visit.
6. Spend time alone with your doctor or nurse practitioner to discuss your health concerns.
7. Learn about your health insurance and health care finances.
8. Talk to your pediatric doctor or nurse practitioner about when is a good time for you to transfer your care.
9. See your primary care provider on a regular basis to help you stay healthy.
10. Meet adult providers before you begin your transitions.
11. Be strong! Ask questions! Be part of the plan!

When should you transfer care?

- When your medical needs are better served in an adult setting.
- When you and your doctor decide the time is right.

Who can help plan your transition?

- Your doctor or nurse practitioner
- Your Care Coordinator

Your social worker or clinic nurse  
Your parents  
A friend who has been through the process

How do you pick a doctor?  
Ask your current doctor for ideas.  
Ask your Care Coordinator, Social Worker, Therapist or Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.  
Talk with your insurance plan coordinator.  
Ask a person who has been through the process.  
Meet with your new doctor to see if it is a good match.

Things to remember:  
Your health care provider is there to help you with your transition and transfer of care.  
Transitions need lots of planning.  
Transitions are a part of growing up. They can be fun, exciting and rewarding.

*Source: Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs  
(1-800-232-1160*

*Adapted from: [www.youngwomanshealth.org/transitions](http://www.youngwomanshealth.org/transitions): Children's Hospital, Boston*