

## Helping Youth & Young Adults Move From Pediatric to Adult Care

### What is a Health Care Transition?

As a child enters adulthood, they need to learn how to care for their own medical needs. A **health care transition** is a process that helps youth and young adults who have disabilities or special health care needs prepare for the adult health care system.

Teenagers may be afraid to speak openly with their pediatrician. During a health care transition, it's important that doctors and families work together to make sure the young adult feels comfortable and informed and has the resources and skills they need to live as healthy and independently as possible.

Health care transitions are more successful when a young adult's wants, needs, and values are considered. Open, honest conversations between the young adult, their doctors, and their family members are a very important part of the process.

Although the health care transition process is different for each person, doctors recommend starting to plan by age 12. This Member Tip Sheet includes steps you can take to help your child feel confident, supported, and prepared to take control of their health care.

### Health Care Transition Topics

The following are important topics to discuss with your child to help prepare them for the transition:

- **Health conditions/diagnoses:** Discuss their conditions and formal diagnoses. Make sure they understand how to manage them.
- **Scheduling care:** Show them how to schedule doctor visits. During appointments, encourage them to participate and ask questions. They should also understand how to consent to medical care and what consent means.
- **Arranging transportation:** Community First offers Medicaid Members rides at no-cost to and from health care appointments and the pharmacy. Explain how these services work and how to schedule them.
- **Managing health needs away from home:** Explain the importance of sticking to a routine, especially when it comes to taking medication, when traveling or away from home. Discuss where to go for emergency care and what to do if they are admitted to the hospital.
- **Navigating the health care system:** Encourage them to keep track of their health records, the medications they are taking, how to refill prescriptions, etc.
- **Understanding health insurance:** Talk about their health plan benefits and tell them who to call if they have questions. If their health insurance plan will change when they enter adulthood, explain this process.
- **Making healthy choices:** Remind them that as an adult, it's their responsibility to make healthy choices and avoid risks for their own well-being.

Ask your doctor about when and how to prepare for a health care transition. A Community First Health Care Transition Specialist can also help your family through this process. Learn more by calling 1-800-434-2347 (STAR/CHIP) or 1-855-607-7827 (STAR Kids/STAR+PLUS).

Source: <https://www.gottransition.org/resource/?hct-timeline-parents-caregivers>

## FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT TRANSITIONING TO ADULT HEALTH CARE

- When do I start having private time at my visits to become more independent in my own health care?
- At what age will I transition to an adult doctor for care?
- What do I need to learn about my own health to prepare for adult care?
- Do you have suggestions on a care notebook or medical summary?
- Can you help me create an emergency care plan?
- What do I need to know about consent when I turn 18? Where can I get more information about help making health care decisions?
- Do you have suggestions on what doctors to transition to?

### Teen to Adult Health Care Transition Timeline

