

Supporting your young person through transition to adult health services

Transition is the process of planning, preparing and moving from a paediatric to an adult health service. It is a natural step in your young person's health care and is best achieved with your support and encouragement. Planning and preparation for transition can reduce anxiety and stress for yourself and your young person.

Stages of transition

There are three stages to transition but when they start depends on your young person's development and what is going on in their life (health, schooling, etc.)

1. Introductory/Planning stage – introduction to the transition process and working out what your young person needs to know about themselves and their medical condition (12-14 years approximately).
2. Preparation stage – your young person starts learning the skills needed to care for themselves and a transition plan is developed in partnership with your young person and yourself (14-16 years approximately).
3. Transfer stage – your young person is looking after themselves with confidence, is ready to transfer and information exchange takes place between your young person's health team at PCH and adult health services (16-18 years approximately).

It may feel uncomfortable handing over the reins as you have been the one making all the decisions regarding your young person's health care however starting the transition process early will give you and your young person time to adjust to the new roles.

Discuss transition with your young person's healthcare team/s and ask them what to expect. Know that you and your young person will be included in the planning process so find out what you can do to contribute and plan for transfer and encourage your young person to take the lead as much as they're comfortable with.

Encouraging your young person to start sharing some of the responsibility for his/her own health care, to the best of their ability, will help them in the future. Be patient and expect that they will make mistakes however place trust in their ability to make choices for themselves.

There are ways that you can support this:

- Talk through things that you are doing with your young person:



- monitoring when a new prescription is required and how to get a prescription filled
- how to recognise when they're becoming unwell and what to do
- monitoring when appointments are due and how to reschedule if they're unable to attend
- taking 5mins before an appointment to think about what they want from seeing the health professional
- Encourage your young person to see their doctor/health person on their own
- Let your young person answer any questions that the health professional asks
- Give your young person the details of their usual GP but, if required, support them to look for a GP that they feel more comfortable with.

Importance of a GP

It's important for your young person to have a good GP that they feel comfortable with as the GP will provide comprehensive, continued and coordinated care for your young person from childhood to adulthood. The GP should be your young person's first contact if they're unwell as they're more available than specialists and they deal with a broad range of health problems. The GP will be your young person's partner and coordinator in their health care and having a good relationship with the GP will help your young person stay in control of their health.

Before transfer takes place

- Encourage your young person to explore opportunities to meet their new healthcare team or visit the adult health service they're transferring to.
- Request copies of all referral letters and any other medical documentation so that you and your young person have a record of the information that is being provided, and when and who it is sent to.
- Talk with your young person's healthcare team about how to manage emergency situations during the time between their last appointment at PCH and their first appointment at the adult health service; a letter from the team outlining an emergency management plan may be useful.



Government of **Western Australia**
Child and Adolescent Health Service



This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

Child and Adolescent Health Service
15 Hospital Avenue, Nedlands, WA, 6009
Telephone: (08) 6456 2222
Produced by Patient Flow Unit
Ref: 1089 © CAHS 2019

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