

TRANSITION TO ADULT CARE

A tool for families to build healthcare independence

Ages 10-11: Awareness & Engagement

Start learning about your health and being present during medical visits.

Child Checklist

- ☐ I can say the name of my health condition(s).
- ☐ I know what medicine I take and why.
- ☐ I pay attention to all my medical appointments.
- ☐ I ask at least one question or share how I'm feeling.

Parent Support

- Involve your child in health conversations and appointments.
- Use plain language to explain their condition and treatments.
- Encourage curiosity and let them ask questions.
- Start a simple health journal together.

Ages 12-13: Intro to Self-Advocacy

Begin actively participating in your care and understanding your role.

Teen Checklist

- ☐ I can explain my diagnosis in my own words.
- ☐ I know the names and doses of my medications.
- ☐ I understand the purpose of routine visits and checkups.
- ☐ I keep track of my medications and allergies.
- ☐ I can describe how I feel when I'm unwell.

Parent Support

- Let your teen answer questions at doctor visits first.
- Talk about how healthcare works (appointments, pharmacy, etc.).
- Build routines for taking medications or using health tools (inhalers, injections).
- Begin talking about growing independence in care.
- Encourage your teen to track their symptoms



Ages 14-15: Skill Practice with Support

Start managing tasks with supervision and growing confidence.

Teen Checklist

- ☐ I schedule appointments with help.
- ☐ I refill prescriptions with help.
- ☐ I understand what a health insurance card is used for.
- ☐ I bring my own questions to appointments.
- ☐ I use a calendar or app to track appointments/meds.
- ☐ I track my symptoms and side effects.
- ☐ I can speak directly to my doctor for the most part.
- ☐ I can fill out check-in forms at the doctor's office with help.
- ☐ I am learning my past medical history.
- ☐ I carry a copy of my insurance card.
- ☐ I can sign into my patient portal with my parents' help.

Parent Support

- Help set reminders or use a medication tracker app.
- Coach your teen to make and confirm appointments.
- Allow your teen to talk to the doctor directly and answer questions on their own.
- Talk to your teen about their past medical history.
- Encourage your teen to complete check-in forms with your guidance.
- Help your teen sign into their patient portal.

Ages 16-17: Taking the Lead

Take charge of healthcare tasks and start preparing for the adult system.

Teen Checklist

- ☐ I make appointments and attend with little or no help.
- ☐ I pick up my prescriptions and ask the pharmacist questions.
- ☐ I understand my health insurance coverage (copays, networks).
- ☐ I can describe my full medical history to a new provider.
- ☐ I can handle a minor health issue (scheduling care, knowing where to go).
- ☐ I know how to find and contact a new doctor that is covered by my insurance.
- ☐ I know how to use my patient portal(s).
- ☐ I can fill out medical check-in forms on my own.
- ☐ I started to collect my past medical data to share with a new provider.

Parent Support

- Guide your teen through new provider research and transitions.
- Support them in updating health summaries and tracking info.
- Encourage them to use the patient portal and complete their own forms.
- Prepare to transfer power of medical decision-making (e.g., legal age of consent).
- Talk to your teen about your planned contribution to their healthcare needs in the future.



Ages 18-21: Full Ownership of Care

Notes:

Be fully responsible for managing healthcare and decisions.

Teen Checklist

- ☐ I attend appointments on my own and follow up.
- ☐ I refill and manage all medications independently.
- ☐ I manage my insurance, bills, and medical paperwork.
- ☐ I use the patient portal to message doctors and track care.
- ☐ I've transferred to an adult doctor and provided records.
- ☐ I know how to find help for mental, sexual, or urgent health needs.
- ☐ I understand my legal rights in healthcare (privacy, decision-making).

Parent Support

- Be available for questions, but allow autonomy.
- Help your teen gather and store important documents securely.
- Support budgeting for co-pays, premiums, or out-of-pocket costs.
- Respect their privacy and trust their choices.

Usually, specialists are booked well out in advance for care establishment appointments. Be sure to talk to your doctor about the timeline of your transition, so there is not a gap in your care.

