

# FACTSHEET

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## Growing Up and Moving On: Transition Planning Information

**Transition** is the planned and coordinated move from paediatric care to the adult health system for those young people who will require ongoing medical care.

### When does it begin?

Planning should begin in early adolescence. It is important that your child understands that some day they will move on, and feel confident about making the move. Most young people will start asking questions when they begin high school.

### How can parents plan for it?

Talk to your son or daughter. During adolescence your son/daughter may have questions about their future health care. Explore the options together and encourage them to ask questions.

They may start to ask:

- At what age can an adolescent still be admitted to the Children's Hospital?
- How do you choose an adult Dr?
- What adult health services are available?
- How are they referred on?

Timing of transition is flexible according to the individual needs so the answers to these questions may differ according to the condition. However, all young people should be ready to move on once they turn 18 years old.

### How should the adolescent prepare for this change in health care?

- Information and education are the keys to independence. The better prepared, the easier it is to make the move.
- Having a "checklist" sometimes helps to organise the process.
- Young people need to start to talk to doctors on their own. Your adolescent might like to think about seeing the doctor for part of each visit on their own.
- They may like to know more about changes that happen during adolescence, and how they may affect their condition.
- They should begin practising independent health care skills such as taking responsibility for medications, learning what to do in an emergency and booking appointments.
- Young people should have a trusted GP. A GP can provide a lot of support during transition and is an essential link once the young person enters the adult health system.
- Teach them how to find out about the adult system, and access services, including applying for their own Medicare or health care card.

The pace at which transition occurs may vary, depending on your son/daughter's medical condition and goals. It should be seen as part of the move towards independence.

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## What can parents do to help?

Parents/caregivers play a vital role in the planning of transition. It can be difficult to "let go" as adolescents learn to become independent young people.

It's important to talk to your son or daughter about their condition and the health care they will need as an adult, so they feel comfortable talking to others about it.

Teach them about the long term effects of their health condition - talk to them about their goals.

Support decision making, by offering choices to promote responsibility and independence.

Encourage them to write down any questions to ask the doctor and health care team.

Help them to begin planning for the future, and accept your changing role in their health care management.

We hope that you will share the information in this brochure with your son or daughter and encourage them to discuss issues with you and their health care team.

### For further information contact:

#### Trapeze

Email: [trapeze.schn@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:trapeze.schn@health.nsw.gov.au)

Website: [www.trapeze.org.au](http://www.trapeze.org.au)

Phone: 02 8303 3600

Fax: 02 8303 3650

Address: Level 1, Suite 2, 524-536 Botany Road,  
Alexandria, NSW, 2015