

Doctors and What to Expect

Finding a General Practitioner (GP)

It is important that all families have a GP. Even though your young person has diabetes and sees a diabetes specialist regularly, it is still important to have access to a GP for other things like immunisation, injury, minor illnesses and other routine care. GP's are there to look after your young person's overall health and to support them with their diabetes care.

If your family goes to a group general practice it is a good idea to try and see the same GP each time you visit. That way you and your young person will get to know them and be able to develop a bond with them.

Choosing a GP is a personal thing. A good GP is someone you feel comfortable talking to, knowing that they are listening to what you are saying and are 'taking you seriously'. If your young person doesn't feel comfortable with their GP then it is important to find one they like, as they will be an important part of your young person's transition to adult services, particularly in areas without resident endocrinologists.

Remember your GP isn't there **just** to write insulin scripts for your young person!

Doctor consultations

When your young person is old enough to visit their doctor (GP or specialist) for a consultation independently (usually when transitioned) there are things that should happen on both sides to make the visit successful.

There are certain things that you and they should expect from their doctor or health professional. These include:

- Treating young people with respect and as an individual
- Providing information in a way that young people can understand
- Involving young people in the decisions about their treatment
- Listening to young people and encouraging them to ask questions
- Respecting young people's privacy and confidentiality.

There are certain things your young person needs to do at each visit. They include:

- Before arriving thinking about what they want to ask
- Arriving on time
- Turning off or muting their phone
- Saying what they think while being honest and respectful
- Knowing their treatment and if they need a prescription
- If they don't understand something, ask to have it explained to them again.

It is also important that your young person knows their own medical history and is confident in telling it to healthcare professionals and others concerned with their welfare.

Confidentiality

It is important for both you and your young person to understand the issues around confidentiality.

When your son or daughter was younger, most of the discussions with health professionals about their diabetes were directed to you as the parent or carer. As your child gets older they may want to discuss some issues alone with members of their diabetes care team. This doesn't mean they are being encouraged to keep things from your family. In fact, we encourage open and honest communication with you.

It is important that they feel comfortable discussing anything with their diabetes health care team (including things they may not want to discuss with your family), and to understand that what is said during those discussions will stay confidential, or just between them and their healthcare professional. In other words, their doctor can't talk about them or their health to other people (including you) unless they agree for that to happen, once they are 16 years or older.

The only time health professionals can break this rule is when they think young people may be at risk of:

- harming themselves
- harming someone else, or
- being harmed by someone else.

As they are legally required to report any of the above.

So make sure your young person discusses the issue of 'confidentiality' with their doctor and other health care professionals. They should feel confident that their doctor and other health care professionals are happy to talk with them alone about whatever their healthcare, and that that information is confidential (with the exceptions above).

Reference:

NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation. *Getting Connected. Information for Young People.* 2005. Available at:

http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/164244/Information_for_young_people_July_2011.pdf#zoom=100