

Taking charge

Information for teens

As a teen, you are learning how to take care of yourself. Over the next few years, you will learn more life skills and become more independent.

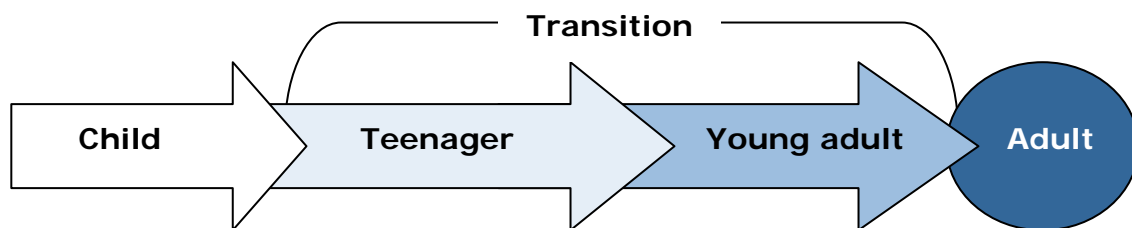
As you become an adult:

- You may no longer need some of the services you have been receiving at McMaster Children's Hospital.
- You will transfer to adult care for the medical and therapy services you need.
- You may want or need to take more responsibility for your health care and direct others to help you.
- You may want to be more independent and active in your community.

These changes happen slowly, over time. This process of growing up and taking charge of your life is called “transition”.

How does my care change during transition?

Your health care will change to meet your needs as you grow and develop.



As a child, your parents and the health care team took care of you.

During your teenage years, parents and the health care team help you learn what you need to know and do to take care of yourself.

You gradually take on more responsibility for your care.

As a young adult, you will transfer from McMaster Children's Hospital to adult care.

This usually happens around your 18th birthday.

As an adult, you are responsible for yourself, including the health care you need. You can decide who is important to you, and should be included in your care.

Who can help me?

Having a plan and people to help you will make your transition to adult care easier and more successful. Your parents, family and friends can help and support you.



The members of your health care team will help you by:

- ✓ telling you what to expect
- ✓ giving you lots of information about your health
- ✓ helping you make plans, set goals and learn what you need to do
- ✓ making the change gradual, not sudden
- ✓ respecting your choices
- ✓ supporting you along the way

What can I do to help myself?

- During your visits, spend some time with team members by yourself. You can invite your parents to come in at the end, if you wish.
- Keep a record of your appointments: who you see, what happens and what you need to do. If it is helpful, write down your questions and feelings. Feel free to bring them up at your next appointment.
- Help us get to know you. Tell us what is important to you and what you would like to learn. Let us know how we can best help you.
- If you have questions, ask any team member, at any time.
- Get involved in making decisions about your care. Ask for information and support whenever you need it.
- Spend some time thinking about what you want in the future. Set small goals that will help you get there. Mastering small steps lets you see your progress and gives you confidence to take charge of your life.
- Be patient with yourself. Learning new skills takes time and patience. It is normal to have some setbacks. Look at this as a chance to learn more about yourself.
- Learn about healthy lifestyle choices. Make decisions that are right for you about alcohol, smoking, drugs, etc.

**If you have questions at any time,
please ask any member of your health care team.**