

# Transition Parent Information: Early Years

## Thinking about your teen's future

As your child approaches adulthood, we want to make sure they are ready to take on tasks for their own health care and decision making. Learning their own care and becoming independent is a process that takes time. We will work together to help you and your teen get started. We want to make sure you know what to expect from your teen's health care team as they get older. For example, we will offer a separate time to meet alone with your teen during doctor visits starting at 14-years-old, if your teen is able. Your role as a parent will move from directly managing your teen's health care needs to coaching them from a distance.

Now is also a good time to talk with your teen about responsibilities related to their health. Staying healthy allows your teen to go to school, be with their friends and do the things they enjoy. As their parent you have managed their health care activities, such as reminding them to take their medicines and teaching them about healthy lifestyle choices. In order for your teen to be successful in college or work, it is important for them to start taking a more active role in their health care.

## As your teen's parent and coach ask yourself the following:



- What are the responsibilities of my teen?
  - What chores does my teen do at home? Doing house chores is a good way to start to learn independence and responsibility.
  - In relation to my teen's health, what can they start to do to take on self-care activities? Work together to agree on what health care tasks they can start doing.
  - **What you can do:** a good place to start is to help your teen learn the names of their medicines, why they take them, how much they take and when to take them. They can make a chart of their medicines and what time to take them.
- What does my teen know about their medical condition(s)?
  - Do they know what they have to do to stay healthy?
  - Talk with them about healthy food choices and have them help you grocery shop.
  - **What you can do:** talk with them about their physical activity and how it helps their medical condition. Have them choose a physical activity they like or encourage them to try a new one.
- What help does my teen need to start taking care of their health?
  - How much help and how many reminders does my teen need for taking care of their health?
  - Can my teen do their agreed health care activities without my help?
  - Is my teen able to ask for help when they need it?



- **What you can do:** they can set reminders on their cell phone to make sure they carry out their health care activity with less help from you.
- Some teens may not be able to do all activities by themselves, but you can help them to learn how to ask someone else for help.
- Practice real life situations to help them with problem solving.
- Work together to come up with a plan of what to do if they forget to take their medicine.

## How can my teen learn to participate in their health care?

- Encourage your teen to spend time alone during their doctor's visit to practice talking with their doctor.
  - If your teen is not comfortable meeting with their doctor alone, have them ask if a nurse or social worker can join them for support.
- How does my teen take part in their doctor visits?
  - Let your teen have a few extra minutes to think about answers for their doctor's questions, instead of you immediately answering.
  - **What you can do:** support your teen in answering questions during their doctor visits.
  - Include your teen in their health care activities and their health care decisions, as they are able.

The information above will help you teach your teen to learn how they can practice responsibility. As they get older, our goal is for you to coach from a distance. Our goal for your teen is for them to learn about their health, their medical condition and how to care for it on their own.

This may seem like a lot to learn, but it is helpful to start early. With your help, they can start now and take it one step at a time. You will both be proud about what they can do. As your teen learns to become more independent, remember you are still responsible for them and will need to continue to coach them in their activities.

For more information visit [millerchildrens.org/transition](https://millerchildrens.org/transition).

