

Transition Parent Information: Middle Years

Coach your teen as they get older

Parents who have teens with special health care needs often tell us that they want to help lower their teen's stress. Parents have shared that they help by doing many of their teens' health care activities for them. While we understand this may be helpful in the short term, it does not help them to manage their own care as a young adult. A "coaching" approach to have them learn how to take care of their special health care activities has been found to be helpful for them.

It is important for your teen to spend time alone with their doctor. This gives your teen a chance to build trust with their doctor. It also gives them a chance to talk about any special concerns they may have.

Another way you can help your teen take an active role in their health care is by having them sign up for MyChart® – a patient's medical records portal. MyChart® lets them view their health records and interact with their doctor(s). Because California law protects certain medical information, some information is not shared. With this in mind, we support teens talking with their parents about their health.

Help your teen learn about their health care

- Have your teen describe their medical condition and their health care needs.
- Work together on the health care activities your teen can do.
- Help your teen work on the health care goals that they agreed on with their health care team:
 - Have your teen call to refill a prescription and make a doctor's appointment with your help.
 - Review MyChart® information together to make sure your teen understands their information.
- Help your teen think through unexpected health situations that they may have. Helping your teen plan for these situations allows them to gain problem solving skills:
 - When they are out with their friends and start feeling sick, what should they do? Who should they call? Teach them what signs they should report to you, their teacher and/or another adult.
- Discuss with your teen what to do in an emergency:
 - Talk about when to use urgent care, an emergency room, or call 911.



Support your teen to spend alone time with their doctor

- Help them prepare and write down at least one question to take to their doctor's visit:
 - Help your teen figure out an area that they may want more information about, such as asking about side effects of their medicines or what an allergic reaction looks like when taking a new medicine.

- Suggest they keep a notebook or log to track their health history. Write down their allergies, list of medicines, procedures/surgeries and dates when these happened, specialist contact information and appointments.
- Help them find "apps" on their phone to organize health information.
- If needed, start to look into guardianship and/or conservatorship.

The specialist will continue to take care of your teen's special health care needs. It is important for your teen to see their primary care physician (PCP) once a year. Your teen's PCP will become even more important as they move to an adult approach to health care, which includes:

- Coordinating care between your pediatric specialists.
- Making sure your teen gets preventive care, such as vaccines and reproductive health information, which is important for all teens.
- Helping with the transfer from pediatric to adult health care, which usually happens between the ages of 18 and 21 years.

Ask the health care team for information or visit trusted websites for general information such as [health.gov/myhealthfinder](https://www.health.gov/myhealthfinder) or [familydoctor.org](https://www.familydoctor.org).

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

