Tips for teenagers moving to adult health care

Teenagers who’ve successfully made the transition to adult health care suggest the following tips to help the move go smoothly.

Getting ready for transition

- Know your health care rights and responsibilities.
- During the preparation and active transition phases (when you’re 12-19 years old), talk with your health care team about your treatment plans and any concerns you have. Keep talking to them as you progress to self-managed care.
- Ask for time alone with health professionals from the age of 12. Your parents can help with this by respecting your need for privacy.

Seeing health care professionals

- Ask questions. There’s no such thing as a stupid question. For example, ask the health care professionals to use language you can understand to talk to you about your condition and treatment.
- Before the appointment, make a list of the issues you want to discuss.
- Practise being assertive and speaking up about concerns. Be clear about your health needs and ask for help when you need it.
- Say what you think. Be honest, but also respectful.
- Be prepared. Go to your appointments with the information the health professionals have asked you to bring, and be prepared to answer questions. It can help to write down the health care professionals’ answers so you can go over important points at home. You can also phone and ask questions after appointments if you need to.

Looking after yourself

- Take a family member, friend or other support person to appointments.
- Think about the things you do to cope with pressure and manage stress. Knowing about and practising stress management can be helpful when you’re faced with the unexpected.