



Turning 18: What it Means for Your Health

Turning 18 may not make you feel any different, but legally, this means you are an adult.

What does this mean?

- After you turn 18, your doctor talks to **you**, not your parents, about your health.
- Your health information and medical records are private (or confidential) and can't be shared unless you give the OK.
- It is up to you to make decisions for your own health care, although you can always ask others for help.

Things to Know

- The confidentiality between you and your doctor is legally known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accessibility Act, or HIPAA.
- This law gives privacy rights to minors (people who are under age 18) for reproductive and sexual health, mental health, and substance abuse services. Check your state's minor consent laws for more information.

What needs to be done?

- If you want to share medical information with others, your doctor will ask you to fill out a form that allows them to see your medical record.
- If you need help making decisions, talk to your family, your support team, and your doctor about who needs to be involved and what you need to do to make sure they can be a part of the conversations.

Additional Resources

- If you know you need **extra** support managing your health or making decisions, the [National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making](#) has information to connect you with resources in your state.

FOR PARENTS:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR ABOUT TRANSITIONING TO ADULT HEALTH CARE

DURING YOUR CHILD'S ADOLESCENT YEARS:

- When does my child start to meet with you on their own for part of the visit to become more independent when it comes to their own health and health care?
- What does my child need to learn to get ready for adult health care? Do you have a checklist of self-care skills that my child needs to learn?
- Can I work with you to prepare a Medical Summary and Emergency Care Plan for my child?
- Before my child turns 18 and becomes a legal adult, what information about privacy and consent do we need to learn about? If my child needs help with making health decisions, where can I get information about this?
- At what age does my child need to change to a new doctor for adult health care?
- Do you have any suggestions of adult doctors for my child to transfer to?

BEFORE MAKING THE FIRST APPOINTMENT TO A NEW ADULT DOCTOR:

- Do you take my health insurance?
- Where is your office located? Is there parking or is it near a metro/bus stop?
- What are your office hours, and do you have walk-in times?
- What is your policy about making and cancelling appointments?
- If needed, can the new adult doctor help find adult specialty doctors?

BEFORE THE FIRST VISIT TO THE NEW ADULT DOCTOR:

- Did you receive my medical summary from the pediatric doctor? (If not, call the pediatric doctor to remind them to send the medical summary before your first visit to the new adult doctor.)
- What should I bring to the first visit?



Please visit www.gottransition.org
for more information.



FOR YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT TRANSITIONING TO ADULT HEALTH CARE

DURING YOUR ADOLESCENT YEARS:

- When do I start to meet with you on my own for part of the visit to become more independent when it comes to my own health and health care?
- What do I need to learn to get ready for adult health care? Do you have a checklist of self-care skills that I need to learn?
- Can I work with you to prepare a Medical Summary and Emergency Care Plan?
- When I turn 18, what information about privacy and consent do I need to know about? If I need help with making health decisions, where can I get information about this?
- At what age do I need to change to a new doctor for adult health care?
- Do you have any suggestions of adult doctors to transfer to?

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