



Moving from Pediatric to Adult Care: Finding a Doctor

It is time for you to leave your doctors at Nationwide Children's Hospital. You will need to find a health care provider who sees other adults like yourself. The transition process to adult care usually starts when patients are between the ages of 18 and 21. The information below will help you take this next big step.

How to find an adult provider

- Ask your current doctor for a referral.
- Call your insurance company or check their website for a list of health care providers that are “in network.” (Providers that are “in network” have an agreement with your insurance company. You will pay less for the services that they provide.)
- Check with your local support groups.

Questions to ask the doctor's office

- Is the doctor on your insurance plan? Does the doctor accept your insurance coverage?
- Is the office taking new patients? If so, how many days or weeks will you wait before getting the first appointment?
- Who will see me in the office? Is there a team of health providers who sees patients?
- What are the office hours? How can the doctor be reached after hours? What about weekends?
- Is there a charge for missed appointments? (Many adult providers have strict policies for missed appointments. If you miss your appointment without

calling to let your doctor's office know, you may be charged – this is called a “no-show”. You may not be allowed to keep receiving care there after missing or cancelling a certain number of appointments.)

- At what hospital does the doctor schedule procedures and see hospitalized patients?
- Do you need to complete any paperwork before your first appointment?
- Is the office easy to find and is it easy to get around inside the building?

The first appointment

Be prepared. Bring to your first appointment:

- your insurance card
- any paperwork that the doctor's office requested
- your medical history and current vaccine or immunization records (You might ask your current providers to send this to the new doctor before your first visit.)
- health records or logs that you keep, such as blood glucose or blood pressure records
- a list of the names and doses of all medicines that you are taking, both prescription and over-the-counter
- the name, phone number and address of the pharmacy that you use
- a list of medical supplies and equipment that need a prescription to fill
- the name, phone number and address of the company you use to get supplies that need a prescription
- a list of questions or concerns to discuss with the doctor
- your contact information, including the best number and the best time to reach you

Miscellaneous information:

- Once you are 18, your parents cannot access your medical records without your permission. What you share with your doctor is completely confidential. However, you can choose to let your provider share medical information with your parents or with others. You will need to sign a legal document to allow the “release” of your information.
- Tell the doctor's office if it is OK to leave medical information on your phone if you cannot answer the call.

- You may have two insurance cards. One is for health insurance. The other is for prescription medicines. You should have them with you each time you go to a doctor or to the pharmacy.
- You are responsible for your medical bills, unless you are still on your parents insurance.
 - You may need to pay a “co-pay” or small fee before being seen by the provider or before getting new medicines at a pharmacy.
 - You are responsible for paying the amount that the insurance does not pay. The doctor’s office will send you a bill.
 - You may need to file insurance forms if the doctor’s office does not do that.

Other tips

- Take notes during your medical appointments. Write down or ask for a copy of any changes to your care.
- Create your own medical file at home. Keep copies of medical information that has been given to you at your medical appointments.
- When you schedule a follow-up appointment, ask for the date to be written on the doctor’s office business card. That way, you will also have the doctor’s contact information. Write the date on your calendar so that you will remember it.
- If you need to cancel an appointment, make sure to call the provider’s office in advance.
- Carry medical information in your wallet that includes:
 - your name
 - your provider’s name and number
 - diagnosis
 - medicines that you are taking
 - emergency contacts and numbers
 - emergency treatment, if needed

Additional resource:

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health:

<http://www.gottransition.org/>