

# Transitioning to an Adult Provider



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Boston Children's  
Primary Care Alliance

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Over the last few years, we've worked with you and with your family to help keep you healthy. It's been an honor to care for you and your health during that time. Now that you are a young adult, however, we'd like to help you be the person in charge of your health care.

## How can I prepare to transition to a new provider?

Since you were 13, we've been having time with you alone at appointments, so that we could build a good working relationship and help you feel more comfortable seeing providers without your parents present. Now that you're 18, please pay close attention to what medications you take and why you take them. You should also know allergies to foods or medications you might have, and know the reasons why you can't take them. We encourage you to call the office by yourself to make appointments, and answer any questions you get from our nurses, nurse practitioners, and pediatricians on your own instead of referring them to a parent. In fact, if you want your parent to have access to your medical record or ask questions on your behalf, you need to sign paperwork in our office giving them permission to do so.

## When do I need to make this transition?

In keeping with the American Academy of Pediatrics policy, we ask that the transition to an adult primary care doctor occur **sometime between the ages of 18 and 22**. Sometimes our patients prefer to start seeing an adult provider at the age of 18; others prefer seeing a provider they know until they've graduated from college. Still others have medical issues that are best handled by an adult provider. We will work closely with you to ensure that you are prepared to make this transition at the time that is right for you.

## What should I look for in a new provider?

- Consider any preferences you might have in a provider—for example, would you like them to be male or female? An MD or an NP? Family practice or internal medicine? Speak any particular languages?
- Consider any restrictions your insurance company may have—you can call your insurance company to find out which providers near you are taking new patients.
- Consider any special health care issues you have, like diabetes or asthma—look for providers that might have special interests or training in those areas.
- Consider any specialists you see—it helps if your new primary care provider and your specialists are in the same network, so they can communicate about you easily.
- For our female patients: consider whether you want your primary care provider to do routine gynecologic exams for you. This would keep you from having to make separate appointments for this.

## Can you recommend a new provider for me?

The best way to find a primary care provider that may be right for you is to do a little research. Talk with family and friends and see whether

they recommend someone. Check reviews online. Call your insurance company to find providers who:

1. accept your insurance and
2. are accepting new patients.

## How do I make this transition?

- Choose a new provider.
- Call the insurance company and make sure the provider takes your insurance.
- Call the provider's office and ask to register as a new patient. If you haven't had a physical yet this calendar year, book an appointment for your annual physical exam.
- Call Commonwealth Pediatrics and request a copy of your medical records. We need a signed release in order to do this; the form is included with this letter. Once we receive a signed copy of this form, we can get your records ready to transfer. This can take 2–3 weeks to complete.
- Bring a copy of your records to your new provider's office as soon as possible. They will need to review them prior to your first appointment.

## Any additional tips?

- Adult providers often book out far in advance, and many are not open on the weekends. Always plan ahead whenever possible.
- Adult providers may not keep copies of your childhood vaccines. Be sure you keep a copy of your records for yourself.
- Once you've turned 18, adult providers are not able to speak with your parents unless you give written consent. However, if you're still on your parents' insurance plan, sensitive information may show up on the bills they receive. Ask questions of your new provider if you need your health care to remain 100% confidential.
- Make sure you have all medication prescriptions you need, as you might not get in to see your new provider right away. We are happy to give one additional refill on any prescriptions when you transfer to an adult provider, but can't give any more after your records have been picked up.

After you turn 18, you are considered an adult, and your medical record belongs only to you. That means your parents or guardians can't complete this process for you. We know that change isn't always easy, and we are always happy to help you get your questions answered. If you live with your parent or guardian, please share this letter with them. We encourage all of you to discuss it together and contact our office with questions or concerns.

**Families with children with special needs, if you feel that your child is unable to make their own healthcare decisions based on mental or intellectual disability, you should think about applying for legal guardianship before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Contact our office for more information.**