

Moving from paediatric to adult care for IBD

This information sheet is for people who want to understand the transition from paediatric to adult care for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Key points

- Becoming independent in your health care is an important part of managing IBD.
- Surround yourself with a healthcare team that you trust to support you.
- Practice the skills you need to care for your own health early so that the transition is less overwhelming.

Moving from paediatric care to adult care in the health system is a learning process but taking full control of your health can be empowering. On your healthcare journey you might also want to keep your parents or carers involved so you can both feel confident that your treatment plan is working as you enter adulthood.

Managing your IBD independently can be overwhelming at first but you're not alone. Many young people feel the same way when leaving their paediatric team, so it's perfectly normal to need help. We have some tips to help you plan your own transition pathway.

Plan (12-14 years old)

At this stage you can start to get a better understanding of your condition and build the skills you need to manage IBD independently. When you feel ready, you can raise the topic of moving to adult care with your doctor if they haven't already. Start thinking about the questions you have about your IBD and ask the doctor yourself instead of letting your parents do the talking.

If you want to be on top of things you can start looking at your My Health Record and ask your parents to help you get your own Medicare card when you turn 14.

Prepare (14-16 years old)

Being prepared before entering the adult health system will help you stay on track with your management and treatment. Now that you have a better understanding of your IBD, you can start playing a more active role in your own healthcare.

Have a go at going alone to part or the whole of your appointment. Bring along the questions you want to talk about with your doctor. You can even make some goals

that you want to reach around becoming more independent with your healthcare. You should also be getting an idea of what self-care approaches work for you to manage stress and anxiety.

Make the move (16-18 years old)

It's time to start gearing up for the big change. You should have a complete understanding of your condition, treatments, and who to contact if you have any concerns about your health.

It's also helpful if you can talk more comfortably about how you're feeling and other things in your life like relationships, sexual health, mental health, drug use, and lifestyle. Don't hesitate to talk about other areas of your health with your doctor.

The timing of your transfer to adult care will involve a discussion between you and your healthcare team. It will depend on where you're at in life and shouldn't happen during other stressful changes like year 12. The age of transfer will differ for each young person but should occur before your 19th birthday.

By the time you have fully moved to adult care you should be: making your own appointments, communicating with your healthcare team, organising your medication and treatments, advocating for yourself, and making informed decisions about your health. Be sure to have your transition plan completed before you leave your children's hospital so you know who will be looking after you in the adult world.

See how you're doing (18+ years old)

Around 6-18 months after you've completed your transition to adult care it is a good chance to see how you're tracking. If something isn't working for you, raise it with your doctor or specialist. In some cases, you may want to ask for a second opinion or even change health professionals if you don't feel supported enough. You can also call our Helpline if you have any questions.

For more information on the transition, including who can be in your healthcare team, visit the Crohn's & Colitis Australia website via the QR code.

For help or information

Scan QR code for website:

Phone: 1800 138 029

