Ideas For Parents/Carers to Support Young People with Chronic Conditions

This factsheet is for parents/carers of young people with chronic conditions.

As your child grows up and becomes their own person, your role as parent/carer will change. The way you adjust to these changes will influence how your young person experiences their transition. Encouraging your young person to take more control of their health, to the best of their ability, will help them in the future. This may at first feel a bit uncomfortable as you have been the one making decisions and organising their health care. Adolescence is a time of letting go balanced with stepping in when needed.

Having to say goodbye to your paediatric team at the children’s hospital and/or your local paediatrician can sometimes lead to worry for parents/carers. Planning and preparing for this transition can reduce anxiety and stress.

Here are some ideas to help you along the way:

- Recognise that your young person has their own thoughts and ideas about their health
- Start teaching your young person about their condition and how to manage it
- Give your young person the names and contact details of their GP and health care team
- Encourage your young person to see their doctor and health professionals on their own
- Make sure your young person has their medical appointments in their calendar
- Before a health appointment take 5 minutes to talk together about what your young person may want from seeing their health team
- Be supportive and encourage your young person to become more confident in taking control of their health
- When the doctor asks a question let your young person speak first
- Be patient and accept that your young person may make mistakes
- Help your young person find a good GP they trust and like
- Encourage your young person to get their own Medicare Card
- Place trust in your young person and their ability to make choices for themselves
- Be sure to give your young person emergency contact numbers so they stay safe and well
- Talk with your young person about how they can get information about topics like sex, pregnancy, drugs and alcohol. Adolescents with chronic conditions need a lot of information to stay safe.