

This is a tool that offers some sample language you might use to guide a discussion with families and youth about the transition from pediatric to adult care. The sample language should be modified as needed. For example, not all youth see a pediatrician.

Sample Language:

“One of the topics I’d like to discuss at today’s appointment with you is growing up and becoming a teen and then a young adult. Have you given any thought to what it will be like to be an adult, schedule your own health care appointments, and make your own health care decisions?”

Your doctor is a pediatrician, which means they take care of children. You will want to see an adult doctor when you are a young adult. We call the process of changing from seeing a pediatrician to seeing an adult doctor *health care transition*.

Just as we are doing today, I like to start this conversation early so you and your parents have plenty of time to decide what you want to do and learn the things you will need to learn to take care of your own health. You have lots of time, and I can work with Dr. _____ to help you find the right doctor when the time comes. It’s different for everyone, but we usually recommend moving over to an adult doctor when you are ____ years old.

_____, is this something you and your parents have discussed?

We're not going to do all this today, but I'd like to work with you to begin this process. Do you have any questions about the skills you will need to become independent in taking care of your health? You might wonder why you need to take certain medications, and how you contact the doctor on weekends? I will work with Dr. _____ to help you understand your health conditions and why you need to take medications. I can also help you and your parents create a plan for how you can learn the things you need to know and find the right adult doctor for you. A good start is for you to schedule your next appointment with Dr._____.

Has Dr._____ started to talk with you about health care transition, or any of the things I've just mentioned? Most pediatricians have an office policy about transition, including the age you will be responsible for your own health information, when they will begin to schedule appointments with you individually, and when they usually have young adults switch to an adult doctor. You can always give permission for your parents to have access to your health information or medical record and to be present with you at appointments. These are just a couple of the decisions you will need to make in taking care of your own health.

This is a lot to think about. I have lots of helpful materials that I am happy to share with you. Mom and Dad, do you have any questions or comments?"