As parents and caregivers, you play an important role in preparing your children to be responsible for as much of their own health as possible. At this time, your adult child will transition from pediatric to adult care providers. These guidelines will help you partner with your adult child to learn information about his medical condition, increase his comfort around healthcare providers, and prepare him to make decisions about his health.

1. Make sure your adult child understands all her medical conditions. Make sure she can explain them to others, both in detail and in a three-sentence summary. Share with her any additional information that she may not remember, and write it down so she can refer to it in the future. If you use a binder to organize healthcare information, encourage her to update it after visits, changes in medications, etc.
   • Together, fill out an emergency health information card. Include diagnoses, medications and dosages, allergies, names and phone numbers of doctors, and emergency contact information. Have her keep this card with her at all times.
   • Make sure she knows warning symptoms that indicate she needs to seek help immediately, as well as whom to call or what to do for these symptoms, and where emergency medicines are (like an EpiPen® or a rescue inhaler) and how to use them.

2. Your adult child is now the legal decision-maker, and legally the only one who has a right to his medical information. Ideally, you and your child will work together as a healthcare team. Your adult child is now the team leader.
   • As your adult child considers where to attend college or to work, encourage him to talk with his healthcare providers about any health concerns. Together, you can find appropriate providers if he is relocating.
   • Most visits may be conducted between your adult child and his healthcare providers only. You are now in a coaching and backup role, but be available if he has questions. You can also encourage your child to write a list of his questions to ask at his appointments.

continued on next page
Your adult child is now the main person discussing his medical conditions at healthcare visits. Providers may discuss private topics with him, such as depression, substance abuse (and its effect on health and on medications) and sexuality.

Your adult child can choose to sign a HIPAA form that will permit the healthcare team to discuss issues with you or with another support person your child chooses.

Encourage your adult child to be as independent as possible and participate in all aspects of life (household tasks, self-care, recreational activities, volunteer work, spending time with friends, etc.).

3. Check that your adult child knows the names of her medications, what they do, their doses and side effects. This includes:
   • knowing how to read medication labels for both over-the-counter and prescription medications
   • asking the doctor or pharmacist about how other medications and foods might affect how the medication works
   • understanding she should only use her own medications and use them as prescribed. It is dangerous and illegal to share medications.
   • remembering her medications and taking them at the right times. Be available to troubleshoot if needed.
   • calling in prescriptions and supply refills. Let her know you are available to help, in case she has problems, depending on how independent she is.

4. Your adult child should know his allergies, how to avoid them, and what to do if he comes in contact with triggers.

5. Your adult child can be responsible for calling and scheduling most or all of her own appointments. Be available to help out if she has trouble contacting the office, or if her school or work schedule makes it difficult to call during office hours. If possible, suggest that she make her next appointment while still at the doctor’s office. She can ask the receptionist for a reminder card so she doesn’t forget.

6. Help your adult child understand what kind of health insurance he has. He should always carry the cards with him and have them handy during any medical visits, know if there is a co-pay, and, if there is, be able to pay. If your adult child is no longer covered under your insurance, help him find insurance options. You can ask a social worker or case manager for help.

7. Make sure your adult child can use public transportation or is able to drive by herself, so she can get to appointments independently, if necessary.

8. Make sure your adult child knows about available community resources related to his condition and situation that may be helpful. Encourage your adult child to contact them and use the support they can provide.

continued on next page
9. Continue the process of helping your adult child transition from pediatric to adult healthcare providers. Some providers allow new patients to visit their offices or speak to providers or staff on the phone. Patients can have a first visit as a consultation to become familiar with the new provider, prior to full transition.

10. Once your adult child has chosen new providers, she will sign papers to transfer her health records to the new doctor’s office. She can work with her pediatric healthcare providers to make sure her healthcare binder is up-to-date. The new doctors can better understand your adult child’s condition if they get a one- or two-page medical summary from the pediatric doctors.

---

**Contact Information**

**REACH Line**
267-426-5569
REACH@email.chop.edu

---

**REACH**

*Rapport, Empowerment, Advocacy, through Connections and Health*

is a program for teens and young adults ages 12 – 24 with special healthcare needs and their families, created by teens and young adults with special healthcare needs.

Written 4/10