

Frequently Asked Questions: Transitioning from paediatric to adult health services

If you don't find answers to the questions you have about transitioning to adult health services here, feel free to talk your health care teams about any questions you have.

When will I move to adult services?

The transition process commences from an early age, usually around 14 to 16 years, where the staff may start to talk to you about moving to an adult service. This helps you to have plenty of time to prepare and adjust to the changes required as you become a young adult taking responsibility for your own health care.

Usually transition is completed at around the age of 18 years, however it is recommended that this occur when your health is stable and you are not going through lots of changes in your life or your health needs. For example, it may not be helpful for you to transition during Year 12 studies or exams and may be better to wait until studies are completed.

The medical, nursing or allied health staff will discuss with you closer to the time, when a suitable time may be to transfer to adult services.

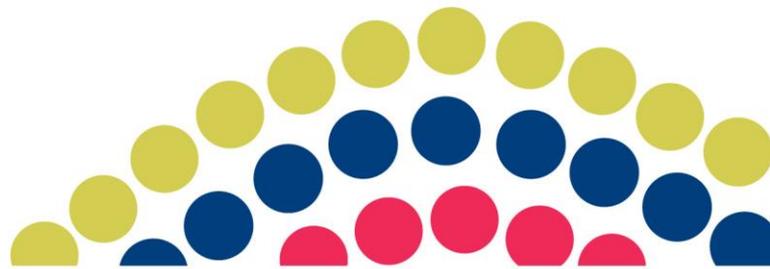
Can I choose where I move to?

You and your family can discuss the various options with your Doctor and they will recommend which adult services may be the best choice for you. This may require you going to various adult services at different locations, depending on your health needs.

Why do I have to move from the Women's and Children's Hospital?

As you become a young adult, the adult health services will be the best place for you to receive care that best suits your needs. The Women's and Children's Hospital staff are experts in caring for babies, children and teenagers. The adult health services are experts in caring for young adults and older people.

By the time you reach 18 years you may feel you have grown out of the children's hospital and be ready to move on to a more grown up service. Whilst we recognise this can be a difficult time to leave all the staff that you have become familiar with, it is a good idea to think of this as a chance for you to become more responsible for your own health care and be treated as a young adult. Other young adults that have transitioned have commented that "it gives them more say in their own health care".



For more information

Women's and Children's Hospital
72 King William Rd, North Adelaide SA 5006
Telephone (08) 8161 7000



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Government
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Women's and Children's
Health Network



Women's
& Children's
Hospital

Will the adult service be different?

In an adult health service, the staff will direct questions to you (instead of your parents) and you will be expected to have a good understanding of your health care. This may include knowing things like what medications you are on, your health history and knowing when to see a doctor if you are unwell.

This may seem difficult at first and both the paediatric staff and your parents will support you to develop this knowledge over a period of time. This is why we start the transition process at an early age.

You may choose to talk to the staff in the adult service on your own, but you will still be allowed to take your parents or a friend in with you to your appointment if you wish. Many adults take family members or friends along to appointments for support. Although you will be asked to make decisions on your health care, you can still ask your parents for advice before making any decisions.

In the paediatric setting you usually see everyone in the one place. In adult services you may be required to attend several different places for your health care. It is a good idea to visit the services you will be using closer to the time you move, to become familiar with the environments.

Equipment supplies are often set up differently in an adult service also. There may be extra costs involved with getting supplies and different ways of ordering equipment. Your health care teams will be able to discuss this with you.

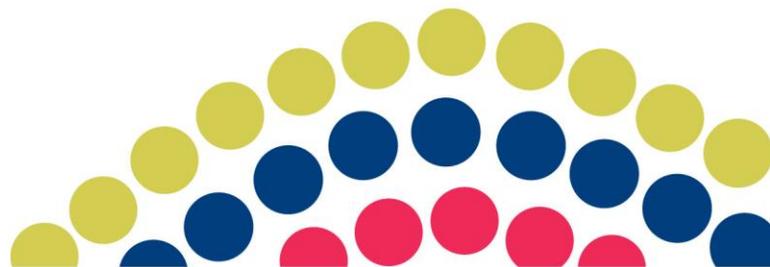
What will be the same?

Although the services you visit will look and feel different and the staff will be new, both children's and adult services are there to care for you and your health and will have your best interest at heart.

What do I need to do to get ready and who can help me with this?

It is very helpful for you to start to become involved in your health care, including understanding your condition and the care involved with this. It may help to write down questions you have and bring them along to your appointments.

As you get closer to the stage of transferring to adult services, you should be thinking about the things that are important to you and how they may affect your health. This may include things like getting a job, driving a car, or talking about your sexual health. You may even want to start spending part of your appointment time on your own talking to the doctor to discuss some topics.



Talk to your parents about transition and how you are feeling about the process. They have been really important in looking after your health and will be a great resource for you as you start to learn more about taking responsibility for your own health care. You can set up a plan with them for how much you want to be involved and gradually increase your responsibility over time. This could be practising things like making your own appointments or getting your prescriptions filled.

It is also really important to have a GP that understands your health needs as this person will play an important role in your adult health care. If you do not have a GP talk to your parents and doctor about this.

Who can I talk to about transition?

If you have any questions about transition you can talk to any of the staff involved in your health care at the Women's and Children's Hospital. All the staff are here to help you with this important step to becoming a young adult responsible for your own health care needs.

I have heard the terms transition and transfer mentioned – what is the difference?

Transition is the term used to describe the process of moving from a paediatric to an adult health service. Transition is a process that starts early (usually from 14 to 16 years of age) and is planned and gradual. The aim is to help you become independent and responsible for your own health care.

Transfer refers to the actual process of moving care to a new health service and occurs at the end of the transition process. A transfer date will be discussed with you, your family and the doctor to decide when the most suitable time would be to move.

