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## Early Adolescence (11-14)

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Early adolescence is a time of many transitions and transformations, and health behaviors formed during this time are likely to continue. Thus, it is an opportune time to begin building the plan for transition to adult care.

During early adolescence, the transition priority is to encourage less reliance on parents/caregivers and more involvement of adolescents in their own health and health care. Having one-on-one time with adolescents during part of the preventive visit is key as this has been shown to increase the development of self-care skills. One-on-one time is also important to help the adolescent develop trust and learn to feel comfortable talking to their clinician. For adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD), an additional priority is to discuss the possible need for decision-making support, including guardianship.

For the clinician, this is a key time to share the practice's approach on health care transition with parents/caregivers and adolescents. This helps adolescents and parents/caregivers understand the practice's approach to partnering with adolescents to gain independence and self-care skills and allows the parents/caregivers and adolescent time to plan for this important transition. A sample transition policy can be found at the web link below.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.gottransition.org/resourceGet.cfm?id=221>

## Sample questions

### Ask the adolescent:

*How comfortable do you feel managing your own health care, such as explaining your medical condition to others and knowing your allergies, what medications you take, and when to take them?*

*Tell me about when you need to see your primary care and, if needed, specialist clinicians. What about when you would go to the emergency room and not your primary care clinician?*

#### Potential additional questions

*What questions do you have about your health?*

### Ask the parent/caregiver:

*How are you encouraging your adolescent to build skills for managing their own health (e.g., explaining their medical condition to others, knowing when they need to take their medications or if they take their medication on their own)?*

*This practice has a process to help you and your adolescent become ready for an adult model of care at age 18 and eventually transfer to a clinician who cares for adults. What questions do you have about this process?*

## Anticipatory guidance

### For the adolescent:

- Over the coming years, you will gradually become more independent from your parents/caregivers, and that includes managing your own health care, taking responsibility for your own appointments, and taking your own medications.
- An important step in building independence is talking with your clinician one-on-one.

#### Potential additional guidance

- Knowing your own medical information and how to access your electronic medical records is very helpful in giving you information about your health. We can help you with this.

### For the parent/caregiver:

- Over the coming years, your adolescent will gradually become more independent, and that includes managing their own health care. An important step in this process is giving your adolescent a chance to talk with their clinician one-on-one and assisting them to gain needed skills to manage their health on their own.
- Our practice's approach is to continue caring for patients up until they transfer their care to a clinician who cares for adults. Part of our care for your adolescent includes preparing them for this transition. By helping your adolescent gain skills to manage their care, which includes having one-on-one time with their clinician, they will be better prepared when parents/caregivers are not present. In preparation, we want to support you and your adolescent in building self-care skills. Can I answer any questions about this process?

#### Potential additional guidance

- It is important to understand that when your adolescent turns 18, they will be treated as a legal adult in our practice with regards to medical confidentiality and privacy (an adult model of care). Information shared between your adolescent and their clinician is confidential and cannot be shared with you without their permission. Let me explain our practice's approach to confidentiality and potential limits.