

Managing your Health

FIRST: Spend time alone with your doctor and other health care providers.

a. Practice talking to them about your health and how you feel physically. Your parents have been doing all the asking and answering up to now, now it's your turn. Think about what you may want to change about the way you manage your health.

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b. Ask questions. What changes or symptoms should you be looking for? What treatments are available?

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c. What changes can you expect as you continue to mature?

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SECOND: Keep a medical journal.

Just like keeping a journal about personal thoughts and feelings, a medical journal can help you keep track of important medical information and experiences.

a. Make a note of new issues or symptoms, when they started, and how long they've been occurring.

b. Jot down questions to ask your doctor about new procedures, medications you've heard about, or anything else that relates to your health.

c. Take the journal with you on your doctor visits to remind you of your questions, jot down answers, and make notes of any new information or instructions that the doctor may have for you.

d. Keep track of your medications.

e. Keep track of your medical activities and therapies. How well are they going? Is there anything about them that is bothering you, has changed, or has become difficult to do? For more information on how to keep a medical journal, turn to the end of this guide where you'll find resources on a lot of useful topics.

THIRD: Start preparing to transition from a pediatrician to a doctor for adults.

a. Ask your doctor if he or she has an age limit when it comes to patients. If they only treat kids, now is a good time to start researching new doctors.

b. The same goes for the hospital or medical center—they may also have age limits.

c. Talk to your doctor and parents about the things you should know about selecting a new doctor.

d. Be prepared to answer what may seem like all the same questions all over again with your new doctor. This is where that journal really comes in handy.