

Bridging to Adulthood Tips: Preparing to Transition to Adult Medical Appointments

Are you getting ready to move from pediatric (children's) to adult care? **Preparing early** can help your transition feel more gradual and smoother.

What are differences between pediatric (children's) and adult care?

Alumni have told us that adult care often “**feels different**” than services at Holland Bloorview

During adult care appointments, youth are generally expected to:

- Provide consent if they want another person involved during the appointment (e.g. a parent) if the youth has the capacity to do this
- Take the lead with discussions and questions as applicable
- Make decisions as able

During adult care appointments, parents or caregivers are generally expected to:

- Play a supporting role if the youth has capacity to consent and has invited the parent to be present during the appointment
- Identify that they are the person's substitute decision maker or guardian if the youth does not have the capacity to consent during the appointment

How can my family and I start preparing?

It is never too early or too late to start preparing!

1. See Holland Bloorview's [Getting Ready for Adult Healthcare: Learn How Things Work](#) guidebook for tips.
2. **Let your children's healthcare provider know** that you want to practice getting ready for adult care when you first get to your appointment. Let them know the specific skills that you are working on e.g. giving consent for your caregiver to attend with you, saying your medical history, knowing your medications, saying your goals, answering questions, asking questions, identifying that you are the substitute decision maker (for applicable caregivers).
3. **Practice ahead of time.** Some youth find it helpful to write out a script and role-play with someone they trust like a parent ahead of time (see examples on the next page).

Also, please speak with your current pediatric healthcare team about other ways that they can help you prepare for adult medical care.

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A teaching hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto.

Sample Appointment Scripts for Preparing for Adult Healthcare

Name: Amy Chung (age 17)

Birthday: April 7, 2005

Things to say to the OT:

- “Today I want to practice what it will be like once I move to adult care.”
- “I’m ok with my dad being here for most of the appointment. I also want to try talking with you alone for 10 minutes.”
- Why I’m here: “I’ve been using a wheelchair since 2006, when I had my injury. I got my last wheelchair 4 years ago with Assistive Devices Program funding. For the past 3 weeks, my back has been getting sore if I sit too long. I want to be able to use my wheelchair all day when I go to University in a few years.”
- My questions:
 1. Will making the backrest higher help my pain go down?
 2. When am I due for a whole new wheelchair?

Name: Salma Ali (Age 14)

Birthday: May 22, 2008

Saying Hello:

- “Hi! Today I want to practice talking more in my appointment even though it makes me feel nervous”.
- “I still want my grandma to be here in the room. Please ask me questions first. I’ll try answering them. Then my grandma can add in more stuff. I’ve also written down some questions for you.”

Why I’m here to see the PT:

- “Today I want to talk about my leg. I tripped and fell last week at dance class. Now my leg hurts when I use my walker.”

My questions:

- Is my leg ok?
- When can I go back to dance class?

Grandma’s questions:

- If Salma does stretches before dance class, would this be less likely to happen again?
- Can Salma book her next appointment with you at the front desk, with me supporting, before we leave today?

Name: Mr. Fred Williams
Father of James Williams (age 16)

Reminders:

- I want to talk more with Dr. Garcia about James' move to adult healthcare in 2 years.
- I want to specifically practice telling Dr. Garcia that I am James' main caregiver and his 'substitute decision maker' and will make healthcare decisions in James' best interest.
- I want to review James' 'Transition Timeline' with Dr. Garcia.

My questions for Dr. Garcia about James:

- Who will prescribe James' medications once he is 19 years old?

The information provided in this handout is for reference only. It is not intended as a recommendation or endorsement of specific programs, or as a comprehensive resource list.

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