



Transition from child to adult healthcare services

The transition from child to adult healthcare services usually occurs when youngsters reach between 16 and 18 years old, although planning for this transition should begin a lot earlier, at around the age of 13. In some regions there are adolescent transition clinics to which your child may be referred, but this is not always the case.

The more planning that takes place around this time, the more successful the transition will be. Adolescent clinics allow the transition to be a more gradual process with staff from both the children's and adult services being involved.

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines state that multidisciplinary services provided jointly by adult and paediatric specialists have a key role in the care of the

young person with epilepsy. A named clinician should assume responsibility for the ongoing management of the young person to ensure smooth transition to adult services.

When changing from child to adult services, the young person will be encouraged to become more involved in decision making on the medical issues affecting them. The more knowledgeable they are on all aspects of epilepsy, the less daunted they may feel and the more able to make informed decisions.

Most importantly a complete review of the young person's diagnosis and treatment should take place at around the time of transition. Although you may still attend clinic appointments with your son or daughter if your teenager wishes, the doctors will be encouraging them to take more responsibility in any decision making that is required.

In the run up to their transition, you can help your teenager prepare for the change to adult services by:

- Suggesting they may wish to have part of the clinic appointments on their own with the doctor.
- Encouraging them to make appointments for themselves, especially with the epilepsy specialist nurse if one is available.
- Checking that they know when, how, and from whom to seek advice and that they know when urgent medical treatment might be required for their specific condition.
- Encouraging them to keep an up-to-date seizure diary.
- Suggesting they write down any questions that occur to them between clinic visits.
- Instilling into your teenager why medication should be taken regularly. They should know the side-effects of the

medication they are taking, and what could happen should they stop taking it suddenly and without medical advice.

- Showing them how to follow treatment plans and how to obtain repeat prescriptions.
- Discussing the effects of alcohol, illegal drugs, contraception and tiredness along with other issues that may well crop up with young people of this age.
- Ensuring that they have a balanced view of how their epilepsy affects them and a determination not to let it take over their life.

A good practice guide on transition planning for young people with complex health needs or a disability' (284732/transition) written by the Department of Health is available by ringing 0870 1555455 or emailing: dh@prolog.uk.com.