

Transition

Information for Young People

What is Transition?

Transition is a 'term' used to describe the process of change. Transition is about moving from one thing to another, like moving from school to University or moving out of home into a flat or unit.

In this case Transition is the 'term' used to describe the process of moving from paediatric to adult health care. This process can take many years so don't be alarmed, you won't be moving on for some time yet! Most young people transfer to adult care around the time they finish school usually this is between the ages of 17 and 18 years.

You may have been going to the same clinic or service since you first got diabetes and you know everyone there and more importantly they all know you. The thought of changing doctors, educators and maybe even hospitals can be scary.

Sometimes young people don't like where they have been transferred to. The appointment times may not suit or they have to wait too long or they simply can't get time off work to attend appointments. If this happens, some young people stop going or 'drop out' of diabetes specialist care. Young people who 'drop out' run the risk of not being properly checked for preventable diabetes related complications and have a greater chance of being admitted to hospital because of their diabetes.

When does Transition Start?

At around **12 to 13 years** of age you and your family will receive information from your diabetes doctor or educator on the transition process. Your diabetes educator will arrange an appointment with you and your parent/s to discuss transition and to begin the process of preparing you to manage your diabetes independently.

At various times during the transition period your diabetes educator and dietitian will arrange for you to be given up-dates on diabetes.

Continuing on the Journey

At around **15 years** of age you should be taking a lot more responsibility of your diabetes management. Once you move to an adult diabetes clinic or service you will usually be seeing the doctor by yourself, so now is a good time to start preparing for this. What we suggest is that you see your doctor by yourself for the first part of the visit and then your parent/s will join you at the end so they will know what is happening with your diabetes. This will also give you the opportunity to talk with your doctor in private.

At this stage your diabetes doctor or educator will discuss the options available to you for where and who will care for you when you transfer to adult care. The idea is to give you plenty of time to think about what **you** want in the future.

It is also time to make sure that you are up-to-date on what you know about diabetes as well as get some new information on how to look after your diabetes in special situations.

At this stage, it is also important for your educator to start talking to you about what **you** should expect from a clinic or doctor visit. It is also a good time to see the dietitian.

Still on the Journey

By the time you are **16 or 17** years most of you will be taking total responsibility for your diabetes. It is now time to see your doctor by yourself for the whole consultation. This does not mean your parents are no longer needed; they will still be there to give you support. If your parent/s comes with you to a consultation they will only be given information about you if you are happy for this to happen.

Transition Clinics

Some paediatric diabetes services run 'Transition Clinics'. These clinics usually involve having joint visits with a doctor and/or a diabetes educator from an adult service or clinic. These combined visits are usually held at the same place you normally go to see your doctor or clinic. These joint visits usually happen for some time prior to you being transferred to an adult service. It is kind of a 'try before you buy' arrangement where **you** decide if the new doctor or service is "going to work" for you. You get to make the choice.

No Adult Diabetes Specialist Service

Not all areas in Queensland have adult diabetes specialist services or clinics that you can be transferred to. In this situation you may be referred to a local **General Practitioner** (GP) who will look after your diabetes. Your GP will then refer you to a diabetes specialist in another town once a year or at anytime you are having problems with your diabetes. The transfer period should be gradual and involve you alternating visits with your paediatric service and your GP. This means initially you will see your GP for diabetes management every second visit.

Case Manager

As you prepare to make the transition to an adult service a 'Diabetes Case Manager' (from the paediatric clinic or service) will be assigned to look after you. This case manager is often a diabetes educator and will be responsible for making sure that the Transition process is done properly.

They will also stay in contact with you after you are transferred to make sure you are happy with your move. A lot of young people find it takes a while before they find a doctor or service that they are completely happy with.

Diabetes Education

This is also a good time to check your diabetes knowledge. You will also need education on how to manage your diabetes during 'Schoolies' Week' and other end of year celebrations, as well as information on tertiary studies and employment.

A New Beginning

The age that you finally transfer will depend on your individual needs and whether there is an adult diabetes service available in your area. Some places transfer young people when they turn 18 or when they finish school where others may not transfer you until you are in your early twenties. You should have already been given an expected time or age for your transfer.

Before you transfer your diabetes educator will meet with you and ensure that your diabetes knowledge and skills are up-to date.

Beyond Transition

By the time you transfer you should be confident to make decisions about your diabetes care. After you transfer your diabetes educator or case manager will stay in contact with you to make sure you are happy with your new service.

Don't Just 'Drop Out'

If you are **not** happy with your new doctor or service we don't want you to 'drop out' of care. Contact your diabetes educator or case manager from your paediatric service or locate another diabetes service in the 'Find a Diabetes Service' section of this website.

We don't want you to 'drop out' of care. Together with your diabetes educator or case manager you will find a doctor or clinic that **you** will be comfortable with.