

How to Use the Health History Summary

To get the form to fill out: Health History Summary is available at <http://depts.washington.edu/healthtr/healthhistory/default.html>

Young adults with special needs are often unsure about which health information of an often lengthy health history they need to share with a new health care provider. The **Health History Summary** form for teens and their parents distills the most important facts in the teenager's medical record. In addition to the general health history, the information covered includes medications taken, names of providers, surgeries and other significant health events, as well as family health history.

Youth and their families who have used this health history summary needed about 30-45 minutes to complete the information. It can be completed by the teen and his/her parents together. If completed yearly, teens learn more about their general health and specific special health need. It helps teens with special needs learn what is most important about their health and provides opportunities to ask parents and health providers for more information.

Parents find they better understand how much their child knows about their condition and are guided in what to teach their teen. Teens learn how to access information and how to articulate their knowledge of their condition. In addition, the collaboration on the health history summary helps parents to deprogram themselves from filling out all the paperwork!

Our suggestions for successful use of the Health History Summary:

1. Begin in early teen years to complete a summary at least annually
2. Modify the health history summary whenever you experience a major health event or a change in medication type or dosage.
3. Complete the form as a parent-child team, moving more responsibility to the teen for completion whenever reasonable.
4. Ask questions of your health care provider and research library and/or reliable web resources for any further information you might need.
5. Take this form with you whenever you will be meeting with a new health provider.

*More information about the Health History Summary and testing its usefulness for teens with special health care needs and disabilities is described in the article "Promoting Successful Transition from Pediatric to Adult-Oriented Health Care" in the March 2004 edition of Exceptional Parent magazine.

Source: Adolescent Health Transition Project - 2004