



Making Connections

- ✓ Join peer support groups.
- ✓ Volunteer as a resource person for clinics that serve other people with your disability.
- ✓ Act as a role model for younger people with your illness or disability.
- ✓ Learn about the people in your community who can give you support when needed.
- ✓ Join associations that advocate for people with your disability or chronic illness.
- ✓ If you have questions about sexuality, ask someone you know and you feel comfortable with—perhaps a teacher, counselor, health professional, or one of your parents.
- ✓ Know how to safely use social networking tools like Twitter, FaceBook.

TRANSITION TIPS FOR TEENS

Take Control to Stay Healthy

- ✓ *Plan Ahead*
- ✓ *Make Decisions*
- ✓ *Have Choices*

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HAVE A GOOD BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR HEALTH AND MEDICAL CONDITION OR DISABILITY

- ◆ Ask for help when you want information or have concerns.
- ◆ Ask health care providers for reliable web sites and books.
- ◆ Ask your health care provider what changes to expect from your body.
- ◆ You are NOT alone-others have similar concerns. Talk to others with the same health issues.



FIND THE BEST HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOR YOU

- ◆ Check with your current doctor or the referral service at your local hospital for names.
- ◆ Check with members of the national organization of your chronic illness or disability.
- ◆ Talk to adults with your disability or illness for providers they use.
- ◆ You CAN interview a doctor before you make your choice and you can switch if your needs are not being met.
- ◆ Find a physician who understands the sexual health needs and concerns of people with your disability.



PREPARE FOR HEALTH CARE APPOINTMENTS

- ◆ Ask for extra time for your first appointment.
- ◆ Write down questions and concerns ahead of time.
- ◆ Bring a short summary of your health status, including past and present treatments and medications.
- ◆ Bring all medications in their original bottles.
- ◆ Bring paper and pencil for taking notes or tape recorder so that you can listen again later (ask the doctor for permission to record the session).
- ◆ Consider bringing a friend or advocate to help you remember what you wanted to ask and what was said.
- ◆ Keep a record of your medical history: conditions, dates of operations, treatments, names of doctors, their recommendations, etc. If your parents have already started a record for you, you can add to it.
- ◆ TELL your doctor that you are working toward taking responsibility for your health care.



BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF YOUR HEALTH TEAM

- ◆ Share with your parents and health care providers your preferences about how to manage your health.
- ◆ Insist that your health care team members talk to you about your test results and health plan.
- ◆ Ask questions about any part of your care or the plan that you don't understand.
- ◆ Know yourself – pay attention to your body.
- ◆ Have a positive attitude!



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR PERSONAL HABITS

- ◆ Make healthy food choices and maintain a healthy weight for your mobility and general health. Be sure to get plenty of sleep to help you stay healthy.
- ◆ Develop a physical activity and exercise pattern for yourself. Getting involved in sports can help you stay physically fit, and give you a chance to socialize with new friends.
- ◆ Take good care of your mental health. Do things you enjoy, such as hobbies or visiting with friends. Get help if you have trouble with feelings of sadness, anger or depression.
- ◆ Avoid unhealthy habits such as use of tobacco products, alcohol or un-prescribed drugs.



MANAGE YOUR OWN HEALTH CARE

- ◆ Make your own appointments for dentist visits, medical check-ups, follow-ups and sick visits.
- ◆ Order your own prescriptions and supplies.
- ◆ Organize storing and taking your medications as directed.
- ◆ Know the expected effects and side effects of the medications you take.
- ◆ Know the symptoms or problems which mean you should get medical attention.