

What is transition of care in Diabetes?

Statewide Diabetes Clinical Network

“Transition of care is the foundation for living a happy, self-managed and informed lifestyle” - Young adult with type 1 diabetes

What is transition of care?

Transition is a 'term' used to describe the process of change, such as moving from school to University or moving out of home into a flat or a unit. For diabetes, transition describes the process of moving from child to adult health care. As transition is a major step your healthcare team will start discussing it with you early to make sure that you are fully prepared to move in to adult care when you and the team decide it is time. We are here to help you and will talk you through each stage and you will have plenty of time to ask questions.



The beginning of transition of care

At around 12 to 13 years of age you and your family will receive information from your diabetes specialist or educator on the transition process. Your healthcare team will arrange an appointment to discuss transition and what this means for you.



Continuing on the journey

At around 15 years old you may begin to take more responsibility of your diabetes management and this a good time to start preparing you for this. When you are comfortable, the team will support you to see the doctor by yourself. At first, you might see the doctor by yourself for some of your appointment and then your parents/carers join you at the end so they know what is happening with your diabetes. Your health care team will begin to discuss the options available to you for where and who you would like to be responsible for your adult care. The idea is to give you plenty of time to think about what **you** want in the future.



Moving on to adult care

Usually between 16 and 18 years old you will most likely be taking responsibility for your diabetes. However the actual time or age of your transition will be dependent on you as a person, your specific situation and the healthcare system that is relevant to you. It is now that you usually begin to see your doctor by yourself for the entire appointment, however this doesn't mean that your parents or carers are no longer needed – they can still be there to give you support. If your parent or carer comes with you to consultation then they will only be given information you are happy for them to have.

When there is no specialist adult service

Not all areas in Queensland have adult diabetes specialist services/clinics or a diabetes specialist that you can attend after your paediatric care. In this situation you may be referred to a local General Practitioner (GP) who will help you look after your diabetes. Your GP also talk with you about a referral to a diabetes specialist in another town once a year or if you are experiencing particular problems with your diabetes. The transfer period between your paediatric service and your GP should be gradual and may include alternating visits between these.

Beyond transition of care

'Don't drop out!' – If you are not happy with your new doctor or service it's really important that you let someone from your healthcare team know. This could be your paediatric service or previous diabetes doctor or educator. We will work with you to find a doctor or service that you are comfortable with.



Photo of clinician with young adult