



What You Can Expect



Young adults with a congenital heart defect will eventually need to transition to adult cardiac care. The transition program at the Children's Heart Clinic will help guide you through this process and empower you to assume greater responsibility of your health.

The transition program staff will help you gain the knowledge and skills to enable you to become more independent as you prepare for the adult care model.

The goal of the transition program is to help create a bridge between the pediatric and adult cardiology clinics that will allow your transition to be a smooth one.

Moving on from the cardiologists you have always known can bring a mix of emotions, including fear and sadness. The health care team acknowledges those feelings and hopes the benefits of the transition program will make this change less stressful.

Armed with the knowledge and skills you gain through this program, your transition should be an exciting time!

Being prepared will lower your stress and give you the best chance for a successful transition.

your transition basics

Transition is an important process as you grow into adulthood and start making your own health decisions. You and your caregiver(s), along with your transition support team, will create a transition plan that is tailored to your needs.

You will play an active role in setting goals and mastering the skills necessary to ensure you are ready for transitioning to the adult care model. Guidance through this process will help prepare you for this change.



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Topics will include:

- understanding your role in the transition process
- knowing how you can become more independent with your health care
- knowing where to find support and resources
- establishing a primary care doctor for non-heart issues.
- understanding the differences between the pediatric and adult care models (including change in processes and expectations)
- understanding changes in confidentiality and consent as you become a legal adult
- gaining confidence in your ability to transition to the adult care model.

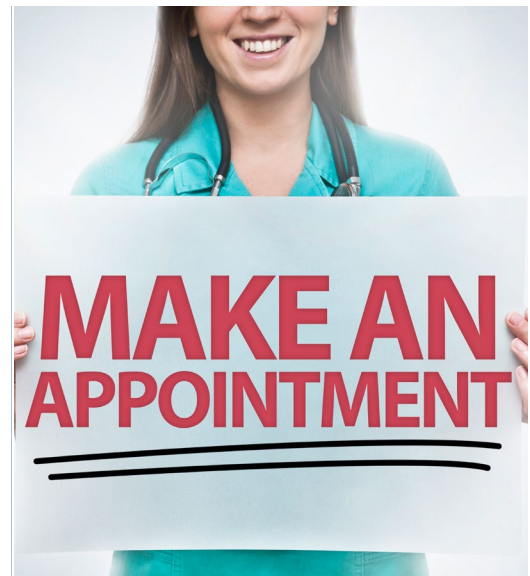
The Transition Process

The transition process will occur in different stages during adolescence. The program will be introduced around ages 12 to 13. It may seem like an early age to start, but it is important for you to start thinking about how you can begin working toward becoming more independent as you get closer to becoming an adult.

The next step is to develop and implement a transition plan. The plan will be created with your and your caregiver(s)' feedback. This stage begins around ages 14 to 15. During this stage, you will establish an understanding of your heart condition and how to manage it. You will have the chance to practice skills that are necessary to become more independent and self-sufficient.

Once the transition plan is created, it will be reviewed and updated at routine office visits. Transition readiness will continue to be assessed at each visit to help reinforce what you already know and identify any gaps in knowledge or skills you will need to succeed independently in the adult care model.

Once you are ready for the transition, around ages 18 to 21, you will be transferred to the Midwest Adult Congenital Cardiac (MACC) Center where a team of specialists trained in treating adults with congenital heart disease will work with you.



Program Goals

- Provide appropriate education for your age and development.
- Help you develop skills in communication, decision-making, managing your needs and advocating for yourself.
- Empower you to become more independent and in control of your health and health care decisions.
- Maximize your ability to live a full life and achieve your goals, whether they be educational, career, relationship or family-oriented.
- Provide transition support and guidance for you and your caregiver(s).

