

**Right now**, you are moving from being a teenager to becoming a young adult. Many things will change in your life after you become 18 years old. This time of change is called “transition.” It means going from one stage in your life to another. Many changes may take place, including where you live, go to school, work, and get medical care to help you be as healthy as possible living with HIV.

This booklet is only about your transitions in health care.

When you were a child, your family or guardian probably took charge of your health care – taking you to your clinic appointments, making sure you took your medications, calling the doctor, bringing you to the hospital for tests and treatments. Part of growing up is learning to take charge of your own medical care as much as possible. Your family/guardian, doctors, nurses, social workers, and others can help you with this transition and answer your questions.

## medications

First of all, you need to learn about your daily health needs and medications. These are the kind of things you need to learn, if you don't already know:

- What are the names of your medications?
- What is the reason for taking each one?
- What is the dosage? (This means the amount to be taken and the number of times you need to take it each day.)
- Are there special rules about taking any of the medications? Rules might be things such as taking before or after meals, taking with food or liquid, not taking certain other medicines at the same time.
- Where do you go to get your prescriptions filled?
- Who is the doctor who has prescribed each medication?
- What should you do when your prescription needs to be filled?
- How do you need to handle taking your medications when you are away from home – for example, at school or at work?
  - Do you need to carry them in a special container?
  - Do you need to bring a cup or water with you?
  - Can your medications be affected if it is very hot or very cold outside?
  - What plans do you need to make if you will be away from home overnight?
  - Do any of the medications need to be refrigerated?
- How do you store your medications and keep them organized at home?
  - Do you use a special container, such as a pill organizer box divided by days of the week?
  - Do you have an extra container to use when you bring your medications with you when you go out?
  - How will you carry along your medications if you go to a party or on a date?

- What do you need to do if you have to take other medications prescribed by a different doctor? Who do you ask?
- Can you smoke or drink alcohol if you are taking these medications?
- Do any of your medications cause side effects?
  - If yes, what are they?
  - Which ones do you need to call your doctor or clinic about?
  - What things can you do at home to help with the side effects?

Someone in your family might have been in charge of making sure you take your medications. It might be hard for them in the beginning to let you take on this responsibility. You might feel that they are checking up on you. They may be afraid that you might forget to take your medications on time. You should ask your doctor or nurse to help you talk with your family about this.

## getting health care

Getting the right kind of health care will have a lot to do with how healthy you are. Here are some things you should know:

- What are the names of your doctors?
- What is their contact information – their name, address, telephone number, fax number, pager number, and name of hospital or clinic where they work?

There is space at the end of this booklet for you to write down the names and contact information for your doctors.

- What kind of doctor is each one? This means what is their medical specialty, such as an infectious disease doctor, an eye doctor, a dermatologist or skin doctor, etc.

- Where is each doctor located? What is the address? You will need to keep track of the street address, name of the building, which floor the office is on, and the room number.
- Who do you need to call to make an appointment with each of the doctors? Sometimes this is an office manager, clinic coordinator, or nurse.
  - What is this person's name and telephone number?
  - What are the hours that the office is open?
  - During what days and times are appointments available?
  - How long do you usually have to wait to get an appointment?
  - What information do you need to have handy when you are calling for your appointment?
- Who do you call when you are having a problem?
- Do you know when you should watch yourself and wait before calling the doctor or clinic? When you should call and ask for a same-day appointment? When you should go to the emergency room?

Ask your doctor for help in learning about the different guidelines he or she wants you to follow in deciding about calling for help.

- Do you know how to call the paramedics or ambulance service in your community?
  - What is their telephone number?
  - Are their services free or do you have to pay? How can you find this out?
- Who are the other people involved in your health care? Write down their names and information on the following chart.

Who/Name	What They Do	How to Contact	Comments
Doctor			
Doctor			
Clinic Coordinator			
Nurse			
School Nurse			
Case Worker			
Pharmacist			
Lab Technician			
Transportation			
Other			
Other			

# TRANSITIONS IN Health care

*A Guide for Teens with HIV/AIDS  
and Their Families*



Are you a teenager  
living with HIV/AIDS?

Here is some important  
information about your  
health care to help you,  
as you become an adult.