

Know your rights, including confidentiality



Adolescent Transition

Adolescent Transition Education Package | **Fact Sheet 10**

An information sheet for patients transitioning from paediatric to adult health services

As you become more independent, it's important to know and understand what your rights are when it comes to your healthcare. If there is something you don't understand in this fact sheet, discuss it with your doctor or a member of your healthcare team.

So what are your rights?

You can expect health professionals to:

- Take you seriously and treat you in a respectful manner
- Provide clear information and explain what is happening in words that you understand
- Involve you in any decisions about your care and any plans for treatment
- Consult with you alone as you get older
- Include your friend or family member during your appointments, if that is what you want
- Give you the chance to ask questions about things that are important to you
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality (There are legal limits to this in respect to your safety or the safety of others)
- Let you look at your medical record and make sure you know how to make sense of it
- Let you know how to make a complaint
www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/xfw/739.htm has more information about your health related legal rights.

Confidentiality

The RCH Confidentiality Policy defines confidentiality "as the right of an individual to not have personally identifiable information disclosed to others without that individual's express informed consent". This means that unless you say so, all of your health information will be kept between your healthcare team and yourself. Confidentiality is part of the law and is also one of your rights.

Health professionals have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality and protect your information. There is only one reason your confidentiality would be broken: if your safety or another person's safety is in danger. However, your confidentiality would not be broken unless absolutely necessary. In most cases, your health professional would ask your permission before letting anyone know anything private about you.

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Consent

Giving consent means giving permission to medical staff to perform treatment or procedures on you. The way you are asked for consent can be formal or informal. Formal consent may be signing a consent form before an operation. Informal consent is also known as implied consent for example, if your doctor wants to examine your throat and you open your mouth, opening your mouth implies that you are consenting.

Can other people give consent on your behalf?

Young people over 18 are legally allowed to make decisions regarding their healthcare. If you are under 18 you will still be able to make your own decisions without your parent/carer, as long as the health professional believes that you are mature enough to make such decisions.

In most cases you will be seen as mature enough and your doctor would allow you to make decisions for treatment, such as going on prescribed contraception or having counselling for depression.

Your doctor will probably talk to you about the value of keeping your parents/carer's informed. It is your choice whether to share information with your parents, and if so, what information. If your doctor considers you mature enough to make certain decisions, your health information would not be shared without your permission (unless you are thought to be at great harm).

Participating in research projects

Research is how we find out new ways of doing things. Research projects can be about a specific condition or disease, or more general in nature. Research projects at the RCH will always have approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee/Department. This is to make sure they are ethical and that the benefits outweigh any harm.

If you are asked to take part in a research project you will be given information about why it is being carried out, any possible risks, any possible benefits etc. Participation in a research project is always voluntary. You should always have a chance to ask questions and time to make a careful decision about participation.

If you are over 18 years, you can consent to take part in research. If you are 12–17 years old your parents need to give their consent, but you should be given the opportunity to give your consent too.

Complaints

If you are unhappy about any of your care at the RCH then you can make a complaint by contacting the Consumer Liaison Officer:

Telephone (03) 9345 5676

Email clo@rch.org.au

Fill in a consumer feedback form:

www.rch.org.au/quality/consumer_liaison.cfm?doc_id=13107

Or write a letter to:

Consumer Liaison Officer

Quality Unit
The Royal Children's Hospital
50 Flemington Road
Parkville
Victoria 3052

For more info contact:

The RCH Adolescent Transition Team on **9345 4858/4980**
or find email details and more info on **www.rch.org.au/transition**