

Feeling good about yourself including sexual health



Adolescent Transition

Adolescent Transition Education Package | **Fact Sheet 6**

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

As a young person, it's important you are comfortable with who you are and have access to helpful information about sexuality and sexual health issues. It is also vital that as a young person with a health condition, you get information from your doctor and medical team about body image and sexual health that is relevant to your condition. The information provided here is general and should not be substituted for a chat with your doctor, parent/carer or an adult that you trust.

Body image

Body image is about three different thoughts:

- How you see yourself
- How you think you should look
- How you present and are feeling about yourself

A lot of people try to live up to the unrealistic images of people that are portrayed in the media. Keep in mind that how you look is affected by:

- Your genes
- How you look after your body; for example, exercise and nutrition
- Maximising your potential

We shouldn't let other people influence how we feel about our body, but unfortunately this can happen no matter how much we tell ourselves it won't. Living with a medical condition or disability can affect how you view your body. No matter how hard you try, (like everyone else) you can't change certain things about how you look.

Always be true to yourself and learn to love the skin you're in.

If you are feeling negative about how you look or who you are, seek some help. Your doctor can refer you to a counsellor, nutritionist or another specialist who can help.

For more information about body image head to:

www.completelygorgeous.com.au

<http://au.reachout.com/what-is-body-image>

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Self esteem

Self esteem is about how valuable and worthwhile you feel as a person. Sometimes when you don't feel comfortable in your skin your self esteem can be negatively affected. Self esteem is about thinking positive thoughts and believing in yourself and what you as a person can do.

You can increase your self esteem by thinking positive thoughts as well as:

- Promoting feelings of calm and relaxation
- Having a desire to look after yourself
- Having a positive attitude and a good sense of well being
- Being open and communicative
- Being independent and having good self-management skills
- Being sociable with others and getting along with friends
- Developing your interests and hobbies

If you have low self esteem it is good to talk to someone about how you're feeling. You can talk to your friends, healthcare team, your parents/carers or support groups.

For more information about self esteem head to:

<http://au.reachout.com/all-about-confidence>

http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Self_Esteem_in_Young_People

Sexuality

Sexuality embodies many different issues including sex, sexual feelings that a person has, people's feelings of themselves as sexual beings, sexual orientation and sexual behaviour. Talk to your doctor or other medical professionals about how your medical condition or disability may affect you and your sense of wellbeing.

For more information on sexuality check out:

www.likeitis.org.au/sexuality

http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Young_People_and_Sex

Sexual health

Once you have obtained some more information about sexuality it is important that you get some information about sexual health. Sexual health is about having good sexual health practices to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STI's). STI's are passed on through unprotected sexual activity.

It is important that as a young person you get reliable and accurate information about these issues. You should discuss STI's and contraception options with your doctor, parents/carers or an adult you trust.

For more information about contraception and STI's head to:

www.yoursexhealth.org

www.mshc.org.au

Getting help

If you would like more information on any of the topics listed above or you feel like you need someone to talk to, have a look at the Adolescent Transition website www.rch.org.au/transition for a range of links for young people on sexual health as well as links to support groups for young people.

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