

# Finding your own General Practitioner (GP) for young people



## Adolescent Transition

Adolescent Transition Education Package | **Fact Sheet 5**

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

A GP can also be known as a local or family doctor. It is important to have a GP. You don't have to see the same GP that your family sees; you should have one that suits you. A GP has general knowledge about a range of different medical problems. They will also treat patients of different ages, genders and cultural backgrounds.

### Why is it important to have your own GP?

Having your own GP will be of benefit to you and your healthcare. A regular GP can get to know you, help you feel more comfortable and talk to you more openly. They will also be able to develop a clear understanding of your health needs and therefore help you make the right choices for your treatment. If you don't regularly see the same GP it is harder for them to understand your health needs and harder for you to feel comfortable and to trust them. Having a regular GP will mean that you won't have to keep repeating information about the history of your condition because they will always have your medical records on file and be familiar with you and your condition.

#### It is important to choose the right GP for your needs.

Make sure you:

- Feel comfortable with them
- Are able to freely express yourself and what you need
- Are able to share your personal information with them
- Are able to ask the hard questions
- Feel like you're being listened to
- Understand the information they give you

#### There are many places you can get tips on how to find a GP, including:

- Friends
- Family
- Your specialist doctor at the RCH
- Government websites
- The Yellow Pages
- Or [www.rch.org.au/kidsconnect/find\\_a\\_doctor/](http://www.rch.org.au/kidsconnect/find_a_doctor/)

\*If you don't feel comfortable with the first doctor you see then keep looking! You don't have to see someone you're not comfortable with.

### Costs

Some GP's can bulk bill their patients. This means that all of the costs are covered and you don't have to pay. You should ask your GP's receptionist if they can bulk bill you.

If your GP doesn't bulk bill and you have a Medicare card, some of the costs of a GP visit will be covered. This means you have to pay the left over amount, called 'the gap'. The "gap" amount is usually around \$20.

If you provide your bank account details to Medicare, the 'gap' amount will be deposited directly into your account.

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## Making the most of your appointment

To make the most of your visit to your GP make sure you are prepared before you arrive. Write down the reason for your visit, your symptoms and any questions you have. Make sure you take a list of your medications and doses if these change.

During your visit be open and honest with your GP, they want to help you! Write down any important information they tell you or anything you might forget. Always ask questions if you don't understand. Anything you say will remain confidential unless there is significant safety issues (see Fact Sheet "Know your rights, including confidentiality") for more information.

## Hospitalisation

If you have to go into hospital for any reason it is important to give the hospital staff your GP's contact details. This is just in case they have any questions that you are unable to answer. Once you have been discharged from hospital, ask if the discharge summary can be sent to your GP. If not ask for your own copy to take with you.

Make a follow up appointment with your GP and let them know what happened, any tests you might have had and the results and if your medications change. Make sure you give them a copy of your discharge summary for them to keep on your medical file. Make sure your information is up to date.

It is also important that your RCH specialist has your GP's contact details so that copies of letters and test results can be sent to them.

\*If you change your GP always give the hospital the new details

## Key questions to ask yourself...

- Do you feel comfortable with your current GP?
- Do you feel they listen to what you say?
- Do you feel comfortable asking them questions?
- Does your GP understand your cultural and wider needs and are they willing to adapt treatments to suit your beliefs?
- Can you make a longer appointment if necessary?
- Is your GP easy to get an appointment with?
- Do your GP's opening hours suit you?
- Does your GP's payment plan suit you?
- Do you understand the information they give you and do they make sure they tell you in a way you can understand?

## Key points...

- Keep a file of important information about your health
- Include the business cards or details of your health professionals, lists of your prescribed and non-prescribed medications plus any herbal supplements you use
- Include recent test results, a summary of your medical history, and care plans you might have. Also include other useful information such as your blood type and allergies
- Don't feel you have to continue your care with your family GP, if you aren't comfortable find another GP
- Make sure you feel comfortable with your GP
- Keep your GP up to date with your health and any recent changes to it
- Visit your GP at least once a year for a 'once over' to keep you at your best (a bit like getting your car serviced to pick up any problems before they get worse)

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](http://www.rch.org.au/transition)**

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