



IBD transitioning from pediatrics to adult care

Transitioning from pediatric to adult care can be challenging for many teens. It's often a struggle to adjust to your own growth and development, while trying to cope with chronic IBD symptoms. It can also be difficult for pediatric gastroenterologists (GI) to choose the best time for you to transition, as everyone is different.

Parents face their own set of challenges, as it can be hard for them to let go and accept your willingness to become more independent and take on greater responsibilities. Part of a transitioning patient's homework is to know what to look for in a new adult GI, so here's some help.

Family involvement

Some teens prefer their parents stay involved, while others are more comfortable managing their disease independently. At your first visit, let your new team know how involved you want your parents to be. The team may allow your parents to join the first few visits or they may feel it's best to see you independently for the first half of the visit and include your parents in the second half.

Self-care

Just as each paediatric centre functions differently and has varying practices, so too will adult care. It is likely that your adult gastroenterologist will expect more independence and self-care from you. If you have a stable history of being well, your adult gastroenterologist might reduce the frequency of your required tests, instead relying on you to report your symptoms. Keep in mind - reporting symptoms to your adult gastroenterologist is key. This will help your doctor decide what tests to run and when to run them, and the plan of action that is required.



Managing IBD

Resources play a crucial role in independently managing your IBD. Ask your new adult GI if he or she has any transitioning resources they can share. Many adult GI practices have a multidisciplinary team, much like you had in pediatrics. Ask if you can have direct access to a clinic nurse who can assess your symptoms by phone or email. Ask if there's an on-call doctor you can rely on outside of business hours.

Health coverage

Discuss medical insurance with your parents. Does your family have private coverage through a work plan or provincial coverage? Will the level of coverage change after you turn 18? Having your parents or guardians manage your healthcare insurance can remove one thing to worry about. At your first visit with your adult GI, ask about funding for your medicines. He or she may be able to connect you with a social worker or coordinator, if you're on special medications such as biologic therapies. Overviews of private and territorial/provincial insurance programs can be found at drugcoverage.ca.

Transitioning is like graduation: it is the next step in your life process. Embrace it. And good luck!

Karen Frost, BScN, RN(EC), MN, NP-Pediatrics, is a nurse practitioner in the IBD program at the Hospital for Sick Children and has an adjunct clinical appointment in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto.



ROBBIE'S RAINBOW MISSION

Our mission is to help improve the health and quality of life of children and teens living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (IBD).

We are committed to helping guide and support IBD families, teens and children by providing access to critical treatments and care, building educational resources and patient advocacy.



Help us help kids living with IBD.
DONATE TODAY
www.RobbiesRainbow.ca



View digital magazine



Check us out on Facebook:
[RobbiesRainbowCa](https://www.facebook.com/RobbiesRainbowCa)



Follow us on Twitter:
[@RobbiesRainbow](https://twitter.com/RobbiesRainbow)