



Transition Tips for Teens with Disabilities

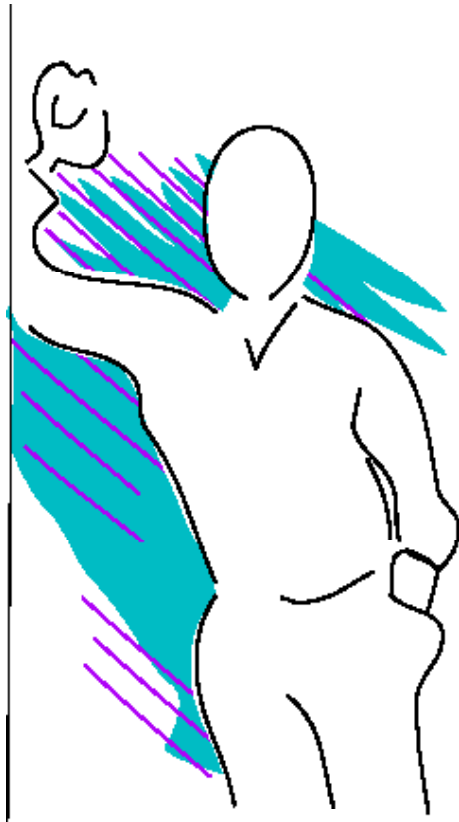
Shriners Hospitals for Children
Intermountain
Fairfax Road at Virginia Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103
801 – 536 – 3500
http://www.shrinershq.org/Hospitals/Salt_Lake_City/



How can I stay physically healthy?

When you are physically healthy, you can better enjoy friends, hobbies and life. Staying healthy takes work. Here are some things you can do.

- Eat good foods such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Eat less candy, fast food and sodas.
- Stay active! Find a sport or activity you like to do. Look for adapted recreation programs in your city.
- Use seat belts or wheelchair restraints in vehicles. Car accidents are the number one cause of death in teenagers.
- Stay clean, odor free and looking your best.
- Say “no” to smoking, drinking and drugs – they can harm your brain and body.
- Ask your doctor how your disability or medical condition might affect puberty, sexuality and your ability to have children.
- Learn to protect yourself from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).



Please call the hospital with any questions at (801) 536-3500. If you are unable to reach the hospital and you feel it is an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

Questions about Transition? Contact your Care Coordinator:

Looking to the Future 02/07

How can I stay emotionally healthy?

Emotional health means feeling good about yourself, being involved with friends and activities and having a positive outlook on your future.

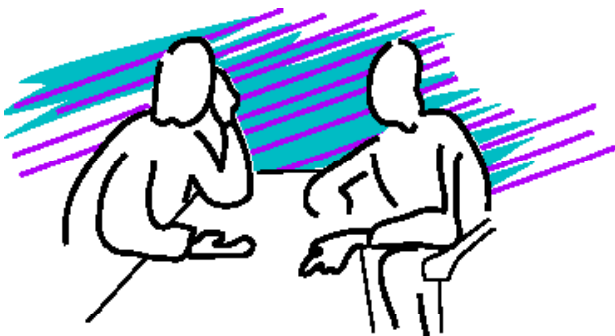
- Find a hobby. It's a good way to stay busy, have fun and learn new skills.
- Join with others who have disabilities to foster "disability pride." Look for groups or activities just for teens with disabilities.
- Look for magazines, books, movies and websites that show people with disabilities in a positive light.
- Get involved! Join clubs, church groups, classes and after school activities that interest you.
- Know that most teens get teased, feel left out and doubt themselves sometimes. Talking with someone can help you feel better.
- Talk to someone when you feel lonely, depressed or anxious. Most teens have these feelings at times. Talking with someone you trust is the first step in getting help.
- Tell a friend, a teacher and your parents if you are being bullied. You have a right to feel safe.



How can I take charge of my health care?

Now is the time for you to prepare to take charge of your medical care. When you were younger, your parents probably did most of the work for you. Now it's your turn!

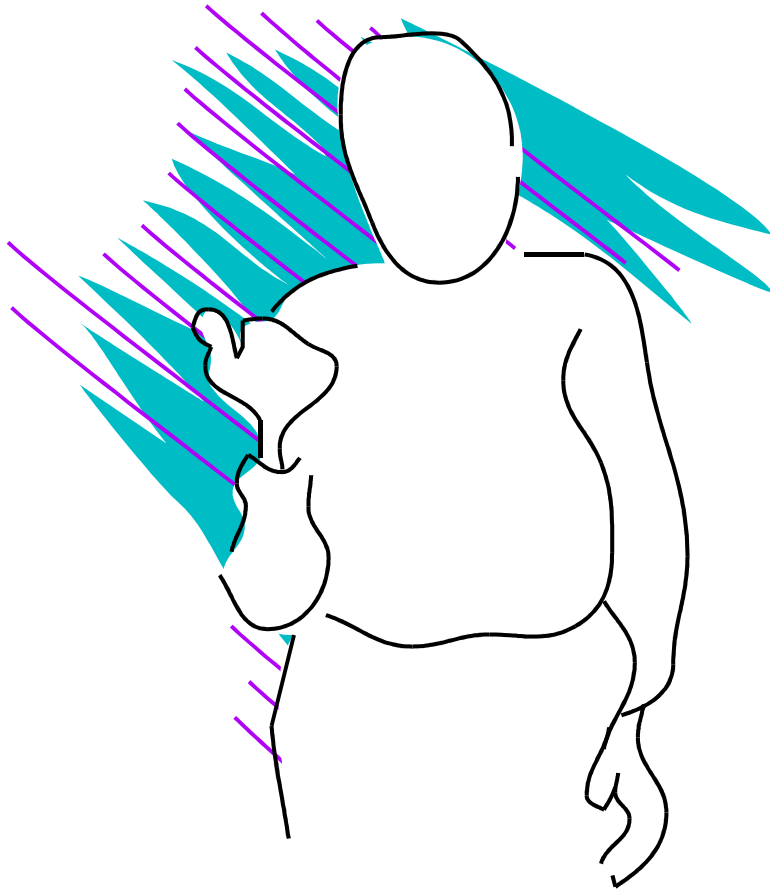
- Learn as much as you can about your medical condition. Your doctors, local libraries and the Internet are good ways to find out more.
- Talk directly to your doctor, rather than having your parents talk for you. Bring a list of questions to ask your doctor and others on your healthcare team at each doctor appointment.
- Spend some time alone with during each appointment so you can ask personal questions that you may not feel comfortable asking in front of your parents.
- Learn how to make your own doctor appointments, refill your prescriptions and what to do in case of a medical emergency.
- Carry your insurance card with you and know how it works.
- Make a “portable medical summary” that includes your diagnoses, medications, allergies, prior surgeries and contact information for your healthcare providers.
- Request that a copy of your medical record be sent to you and your primary healthcare provider at each appointment.
- Follow through with what your doctors, therapists, care coordinators and others on your healthcare team recommend.



How can I get more information about living with a disability and planning for my future?

- **Ability Online:** A free and monitored online support community that links youth ages 11-24 with disabilities or illnesses to other kids and adults who care. Includes monitored discussion boards, chat rooms, games and activities. www.ablelink.org/public/new/index.html
- **Band-Aids and Blackboards:** Site for youth growing up with any type of medical problem or disability. Includes poetry, stories, art, photos and essays by teens with special health care needs. www.lehman.cuny.edu/faculty/jfleitas/bandaides
- **Kids As Self Advocates (KASA):** National network of youth with disabilities and their friends that speak out and educate others about issues relevant to youth with special health care needs. www.fvkasa.org/index.html
- **Youthhood.org:** A website that can help you plan for the future. Includes an online journal, a goal planner and other useful tools for preparing for life after high school. www.youthhood.org

- Take “safe risks.” Ride the bus with a friend, join a new club or group or spend the night away from home. Sometimes you don’t know what you are capable of doing until you try.
- Don’t let other people do for you what you can do for yourself. But remember to ask for help when you need it.



How can I succeed in school?

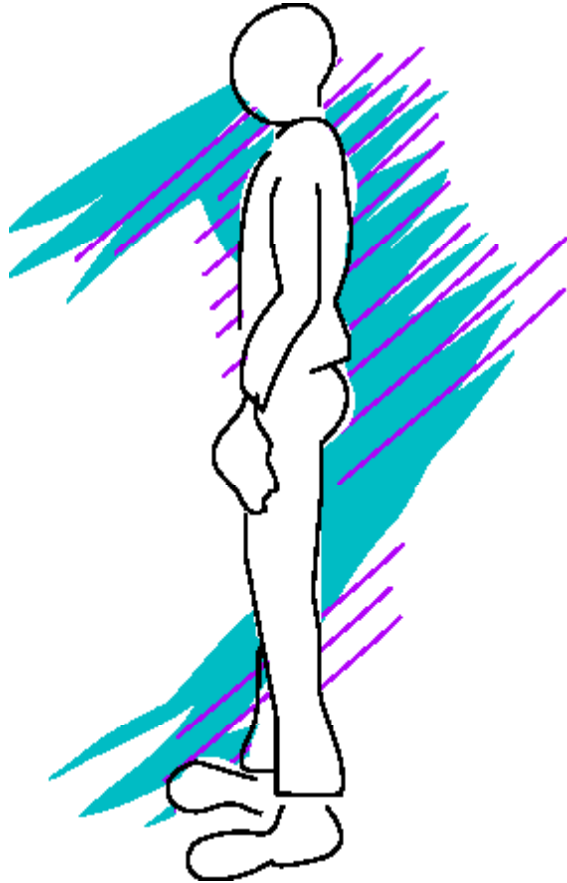
School is where you learn and practice many of the skills you will need in order to do well in college and in the work force.

- Go to your IEP meetings. Your parents and teachers are making big decisions about your education in these meetings. By going to the meetings, you can make sure that your ideas and opinions are heard.
- Talk with your teachers about your medical condition and whether it will affect your school work or your class participation. Let them know how they can help you succeed in school.
- Stay up to date on how you are doing in school. Keep track of your credits and make sure you are taking all the classes you need for the college or vocational school you want to attend. Talk to your school counselor if you have questions.
- Start thinking about what you want to do after graduation. Look into colleges or vocational schools that interest you. Prepare for entrance exams, apply for scholarships and contact the Disability Resource Center of the college you want to attend.

How can I prepare for work?

There are many things you can do now as a teenager to prepare yourself for work.

- Volunteer. This is a good way to learn job skills, build your resume and meet new people.
- Practice job interviewing skills with a friend or family member.
- Practice filling out job applications.
- Work on your resume. There are many Internet sites that can give you ideas on how to get started.
- Apply for summer or after school jobs.
- Start your own business. Be creative and find something interesting to you that people will pay you to do. Dog walking, can recycling and babysitting have all been profitable businesses for teenagers.
- Connect with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) at the end of your junior year of high school. VR is an agency that helps people with disabilities obtain education and employment.



How can I get ready for the future?

Your future is up to you. Start now to plan for your future. It will be here before you know it!

- Help around the house with chores and other responsibilities. This is good practice for when you live on your own someday. It is also a good way to show your parents that you are growing up and are ready for more responsibilities and privileges.
- Ask yourself what you would like your life to be like five or ten years from now. What kind of job do you want to have? Where would you like to live? What would you like to do for fun? Dare to dream!
- Set goals for yourself. Break your goals down into small steps. Reward yourself when you reach your goals.

