TIPS FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

1. Give your child adequate information to make educated decisions. Talk to your child directly and frankly about his or her condition. Information is power, and you can help allay your child’s fears by removing some of the uncertainty.

2. Give your child plenty of decision-making opportunities, and listen to your child’s opinions. Does your teen prefer to see the doctor early in the morning so that appointments do not conflict with afternoon activities? Now that she is a teenager, would your daughter prefer a female doctor? It can be hard to separate your own ideas and preferences from your child’s wishes. Remember, the parent’s role is to guide children through this process, not coerce them. If you frequently override your child’s decisions, he or she is likely to feel helpless and lose interest in the issue.

3. Talk to your child about his or her dreams and goals. Help your child understand how health is connected to the goals. If you believe a goal is unrealistic, do not criticize, but help your child break it down into smaller steps that can be accomplished more easily.

4. Maintain realistic limits. While you want to support your child and give your child opportunities to learn from mistakes, do not give up more responsibility than you should.

5. Be willing to laugh at yourself and point out your own mistakes when you make them. Describe the decision-making processes you use in daily life, and talk to your child about how you make certain decisions. Talk about the consequences – positive and negative – of your decisions.

6. Take opportunities to develop acquaintances with adults who have similar disabilities to those of your child. It helps you envision what adults with disabilities can accomplish and gives you a sense of what you can realistically expect of your child. One of the person’s you meet might become a role model for your child.

7. Arrange for your child to talk to peers who have similar conditions. Your child can share experiences and information with others who are learning to manage their needs successfully.

8. Work with your child on the “Health Care Skills Checklist” below, so that he or she can become as self-sufficient as possible during adolescence.

### Health Care Skills Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Description</th>
<th>Can do already</th>
<th>Needs practice</th>
<th>Plan to start</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands condition and current health status</td>
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<td>Is aware of medical records, diagnosis information, etc.</td>
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<td>Prepares questions for doctors, nurses, therapists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responds appropriately to questions from doctors, nurses, therapists</td>
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<td>Knows medications and what they do</td>
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<td>Able to get a prescription refilled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeps a calendar of appointments</td>
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<td>Knows height, weight and birthdate</td>
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<td>Knows health emergency telephone numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takes care of own menstrual needs &amp; records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes contact with appropriate community advocacy organizations</td>
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TRANSITION RESOURCES

**Websites:**
- [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)
- [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)
- [www.hrwtw.org](http://www.hrwtw.org)
- [http://hctransitions.icdp.ufl.edu](http://hctransitions.icdp.ufl.edu)
- [www.depts.washington.edu/healthtr](http://www.depts.washington.edu/healthtr)
- [www.ca.db101.org](http://www.ca.db101.org)
- [www.disabilityrightsca.org](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org)
- [www.tknlyouth.org](http://www.tknlyouth.org)

**Local Agencies:**
- **School Counselor/Nurse**
  - Dept. of Rehabilitation
    - Santa Barbara: 560-8130
    - Santa Maria: 928-1891
  - [www.dor.ca.gov](http://www.dor.ca.gov)
- **Family First (Alpha Resource Center)**
  - Santa Barbara: 683-2145
  - Santa Maria: 347-2775
- [www.alphasb.org](http://www.alphasb.org) (family services)
- **Independent Living Res. Ctr.**
  - Santa Barbara: 963-0595
  - Santa Maria: 925-0015
  - [www.ihc-trico.org](http://www.ihc-trico.org)
- **Tri-Counties Regional Center**
  - Santa Barbara: 962-7881
  - Santa Maria: 922-4640
  - [www.tri-counties.org](http://www.tri-counties.org)