

CLINICAL CARE: FINDING A NEW DOCTOR

There are a million things that can get in the way of you seeing your doctor once you arrive on campus, but it is extremely important to continue to do so.

We will walk you through finding a new provider and give you some tips on tackling other doctor-related challenges.



Reasons to Begin Looking

- ▶ You attend school hours away from home and are unable to see your health care provider(s) as regularly as you would like.
- ▶ You aged out from your pediatric provider.
- ▶ You feel guilty and/or not empowered after leaving appointments.
- ▶ You feel your health care provider doesn't understand or is unable to help you.

How to Find an Adult Provider

Finding the right provider, especially when transitioning from pediatric to adult care, can be a lot like dating. Personality types, approaches to diabetes management, priorities, and location are all important points to consider.

Take the following steps:

- ▶ Talk to your doctor about which adult providers they think would be a good fit.
- ▶ Read reviews of health care providers online.
- ▶ Check out the CDN 'Patient Empowerment' webpage for directories where you can search for health care providers in your area.
- ▶ Contact members of the CDN Chapter on your campus and ask who they see for their diabetes management and whether or not they would recommend them.

Ask Questions

To help you determine if a health care provider is right for you, we suggest asking the provider (*or their team*) the following questions, and evaluating their answers, during your first appointment:

- ▶ How much time do you spend with a patient during an appointment?
- ▶ Who does the diabetes care team consist of?
(*CDEs, exercise physiologist, nutritionist, psychologist, social worker, etc.*)
- ▶ What do you think are the most important parts of diabetes care?
- ▶ How much personal experience do you have with T1D?
- ▶ How open are you to new technologies, research, and therapies?
- ▶ Who is on call when you are not available?
- ▶ Are you available between scheduled appointments and can I stay in contact with you remotely?
- ▶ Have you ever worked at a diabetes camp?

Last Meeting: Former Provider

- ▶ Discuss any concerns you may have about transitioning providers.
- ▶ Ask your provider's office to transfer your patient records to your new provider. Make sure to have the new provider's fax number.

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First Meeting: New Provider

Preparing for the Appointment

Make a call to your new doctor's office and find out exactly what you need to do before getting there. Some doctors require you to have lab work done prior to your appointment.

Be open and honest about what you want and expect from your relationship. That might be a kick-in-the-butt or acknowledgment and support. Either way, BE ASSERTIVE! Your doctor is there to help you, so let them.

Write down questions for your new doctor before your visit. In addition, try writing down what you're struggling with. **Here are some questions to get you thinking:**

- ▶ What has been successful in your diabetes management and what has not?
- ▶ When is the most challenging time of day?
- ▶ Are there any activities that you are struggling to manage blood sugars during?
- ▶ How does your A1c seem in comparison to how much work you are putting into managing your diabetes?
- ▶ Are you struggling with anxiety, depression, burnout, or eating disorder/body image issues related to your diabetes?
- ▶ What are the social barriers to managing your diabetes right now?
- ▶ What motivates you? What are your goals?

At the Appointment

- ▶ Bring a friend or family member to the appointment. They can be your support system before and after the appointment.
- ▶ Bring everything you need with you. That includes all of your diabetes supplies (*meter, CGM, and pump*), your insurance card, and any other paperwork that the doctor's office has requested.
- ▶ Ask questions during the appointment to clarify things and to make sure you are understanding recommendations or information from your provider.
- ▶ Take notes during the appointment so you remember what you discussed.
- ▶ Make the adjustments that your doctor has prescribed. It's easy to leave the doctor's office and forget about the changes you said you'd make. Program all of the technical adjustments into your pump as soon as you leave (*or during the appointment*) and make sure everything else (*equations, ratios, basal rates, etc.*) is written down for future reference.

Challenge

Solutions

My school is in a rural area, I don't have a car, and the nearest endocrinologist is hours away.

- ✓ Ask your friends with cars if they'd be interested in going on a road trip.
- ✓ Schedule your appointment around the same time as another Chapter member and carpool together.
- ✓ Schedule appointments to take place while you're at home for breaks or holidays.
- ✓ Explain your situation to your doctor and ask if they can do virtual check-ups.

I know that my HbA1c is not where I want it to be and I don't want to feel worse than I already do about it.

- ✓ Your doctor's job is to help you better manage your diabetes and identify what's not working. If your doctor is making you feel guilty, consider finding another who supports you.
- ✓ Read through the questions to the left of this table for ideas to discuss and work on with your doctor.

I don't have enough data for a constructive appointment.
(e.g. I don't check frequently)

- ✓ Again, it's your doctor's job to help you better manage your diabetes and identify what's not working. A good doctor will help you figure out how to get back on track.
- ✓ As you know, diabetes isn't just about the numbers. You should be able to have a productive appointment with your doctor, even if you're lacking a large amount of data.

Schedule Your Next Appointment

Whether with the same doctor, or a new one, schedule your next endocrinologist appointment ASAP so that you don't forget. You can always reschedule it if you need to, but get it on the calendar right away.

Evaluate Your First Visit

Do you like your doctor? Do you feel more empowered about your diabetes care than when you walked in? Were your questions/concerns addressed? These are really important questions to ask yourself. If the answer is 'no', then consider finding another doctor.