As adolescents with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) grow older, they will eventually need to transition from a pediatric to an adult specialist. This transition can be challenging if young adults are not prepared to take responsibility for their healthcare. Even young adults who choose to remain with their pediatric specialist should transition from dependence on their parents to independent self-management. Successful transition to an adult specialist requires collaboration among the patient, family, and healthcare teams.

Healthcare providers, parents, and the young adult themselves all need to take responsibility for educating the patient about his or her disease, medications, and other healthcare needs. Ideally this should be done before a young adult with IBD begins their first job or goes to college. The patient should be encouraged to ask questions and participate actively in care. Some key areas for successful transition are listed below.

KNOWLEDGE:
- What is the patient’s disease (Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis)?
- Where in the intestine is the disease located?
- What medications does the patient take (name, dose, purpose, side effects, interactions)?
- If the patient has had surgery, what kind of surgery was it?
- What tests have been done, and what are the results of those tests (imaging studies such as CT, upper endoscopy, colonoscopy, liver biopsy)?

INDEPENDENCE AND ASSERTIVENESS
Independent health behaviors are an important step before transition. The patient should be responsible for:
- Medications, doctors’ visits (scheduling and self-reporting at visit)
- Self-advocacy at school and work
- Understanding insurance issues and information

HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE
- Diet, formula supplement
- Effect of drugs, smoking
- Consequences of nonadherence
- Fertility/sexuality

The precise age at which children and adolescents assume these tasks and responsibilities varies based on their psychological, emotional, and social maturity as well as their disease activity, environment, and support systems. This process is dynamic and is not the same for everyone.

The checklist on the reverse side provides a reminder of what and when to encourage the patient to assume more responsibility.
This checklist was based on faculty expertise, review of existing publications, and adaptations of “Transition Planning Checklist” by the Children’s & Women’s Health Centre of British Columbia.