

FOR SICKLE CELL WARRIORS TRANSITIONING INTO ADULTCARE



Transitioning into adulthood is exciting -- whether you're moving out of your parent's home or going to college -- but like all life transitions, it can be scary, especially when dealing with a chronic health issue. The best way to deal with that is to be as prepared as possible.

As you make this transition into independence, here are a few good things to keep in mind for managing your healthcare:

1 KNOW THE BASICS ABOUT YOUR DISEASE.

Having the basics of your condition, your medical history, your prescriptions and emergency numbers on one sheet of paper or medical information card could prove to be very valuable if needed quickly.

2 ACCESS IS CRITICAL.

If you're moving away, ask your hematologist or primary care physician to make a referral to a provider in your new area, and to provide you with a copy of a summary or most recent medical records to take with you.

3 CREATE A CIRCLE OF HELP.

You might not want to tell a lot of people about your condition, but at least consider telling those closest to you, such as your roommate, resident advisor, professor(s), or co-worker. Show them what to do in case of an emergency, like pointing out where you keep your emergency contact information and the location of the nearest hospital or clinic.

4 MANAGE YOUR MEDICATIONS.

Find out where to refill your prescriptions and take medications as prescribed by your provider.

5 MAINTAIN HEALTHY HABITS.

Trying to function in class or at work after pulling an "all nighter" can be brutal on your body when you're living with a chronic disease. Don't underestimate how important sleep is, as well as a healthy diet and exercise.

6 PACE YOURSELF.

Sometimes you may have to sit out or take a nap in the middle of the day. It's okay to say no and cancel plans when you need to. Be responsible.

7 STAY HEALTHY.

Make sure you've gotten all of the school required immunizations, plus any vaccinations your doctor recommends for your chronic disease. To avoid picking up a bug, be careful not to share personal hygiene items with your roommates.

8 VISIT YOUR COLLEGE HEALTH CENTER.

Make an appointment at the beginning of the year to introduce yourself to the center and its staff. Familiarize them with your condition. Learn who to contact after-hours and the location of the nearest hospital in case you have an emergency.

9 ASK ABOUT CAMPUS RESOURCES.

Get to know your college office of disability services. Let them know what special accommodations you'll need to help you get through the school year.

10 BE A PART OF YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM.

Self-management/monitoring lets you spot potentially harmful changes before they bloom into real trouble.

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