



Starting Adult Heart Care

If you were born with a heart condition, you need care for a lifetime. Around age 18, you usually switch from seeing a children's heart doctor to one who cares for adults. This includes doctors in the Adult Congenital Heart Program at the OHSU Knight Cardiovascular Institute.

How is adult heart care different?

You know more about your own care and how to manage it. Your body and activities are different from when you were a child, too. Getting adult heart care means getting help keeping your heart healthy through work and other activities, possible pregnancy and just getting older.

Why switch to adult heart care?

Switching is part of becoming an adult, like going to school or moving to a new home. An adult heart specialist is trained to understand your body's needs now that you are older. They can help you stay healthy and do many of the things you want to do.

What to expect when you switch to adult heart care

A parent or caregiver usually comes to your appointments when you are a child. They also make appointments, pay bills, get your medicines and talk with the doctor.

As an adult, you know more about your care and how to manage it. You need to know:

- The name of your heart condition and how it can affect you
- Any surgery or other procedures you have had
- When to call the doctor about a problem and when you need checkups

In adult heart care, you will:

- See your doctor and other health care providers by yourself
- Make your own appointments
- Pick up medicines and get refills
- Sign forms and use health insurance

You make the decisions about your health care. You can always ask friends, family and health care providers for their ideas, if you want.

Getting ready for adult heart care

- Make sure your new doctor has your phone number, so they can contact you directly.
- Get used to making appointments online or by phone.
- Tell your heart care doctor which other doctors you see, so they can share information.
- Learn which medicines you take, why you take them and how to get refills.
- Know what insurance you have, what it pays for and who pays for anything else.

At OHSU, get the MyChart app, sign up online at [ohsu.edu/mychart](https://www.ohsu.edu/mychart) or call **503-494-5252** for help. On MyChart, you can see your appointments and test results, make new appointments, message your doctor, pay your bill and more.

For more information

- Learn more about OHSU heart care at <https://www.ohsu.edu/knight-cardiovascular-institute/making-move-adult-care>
- If you were born with a heart condition, iheartchange has information on almost everything, including travel, medicines, sex, driving, vaccines and more. No judgment, just how to stay safe and healthy. www.iheartchange.org
- A checklist can help you start adult care. Find one at <https://www.conqueringchd.org/transition-checklist/>

Questions about starting adult heart care?

Call us at **503-418-5750** or send your doctor's office a MyChart message. Please do not use MyChart for urgent questions or emergencies.



Should I get a medical bracelet?

If you pass out or have an accident, you may be taken to get medical care before you are aware of it.

A medical bracelet or other jewelry stating your condition can help doctors give you the treatments that are safe for your heart.

To buy, search for "medical ID bracelet" in your web browser.