



Adolescent Confidentiality & Transition Policy

At Pediatric Associates, we want to recognize and support our teenage patients' evolving maturity and independence. Adolescence is a time of transition toward adulthood, and we believe that we should support this healthy transition in our office. Some teenagers may have health concerns that warrant professional advice and/or treatment, and they may not feel comfortable discussing this with their family and friends. In surveys, many adolescents say that concerns about confidentiality are a big reason they may avoid seeking medical care.

We strive to provide the best care possible for our adolescent patients. To that end, we want our teens and parents to be aware of the following:

- Beginning at age 13, we will have part of each visit alone with our teens. This time alone with the provider gives the patient a chance to address any concerns or issues.
- When teens share something with us that they ask to remain confidential, we will honor that request, unless they plan to harm themselves or someone else. Although we always encourage patients to be open and honest with their parents, we also want them to have a safe place to go with any health concerns, and sometimes we can be that safe place. We hope that parents will trust us to take the best care of our teens in these situations.
- We are also happy to speak privately with parents during the visit, at their request, about any concerns that they may want to share with us about their teen. We will maintain our patient's confidentiality in these discussions.
- These confidentiality parameters also extend to any telephone calls that we may have with our teen patients about their healthcare, including discussions about appropriate lab/imaging evaluations and results.
- When our patients turn 18 years old, we follow federal guidelines mandating that they make decisions about with whom and how their medical information is shared. We will require their consent to discuss any information about prescriptions, appointments, referrals and visits.
- We will collaborate with youth and families regarding the age for transferring to an adult provider and recommend that this transfer before age 23. We will assist with this transfer of care including help identify and adult provider, sending medical records and communication with the adult provider about the unique needs of our patients.

This policy is consistent with Massachusetts State Law surrounding adolescent confidentiality, and it is also consistent with the policies of the Society for Adolescent Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Please let us know if you have any questions.