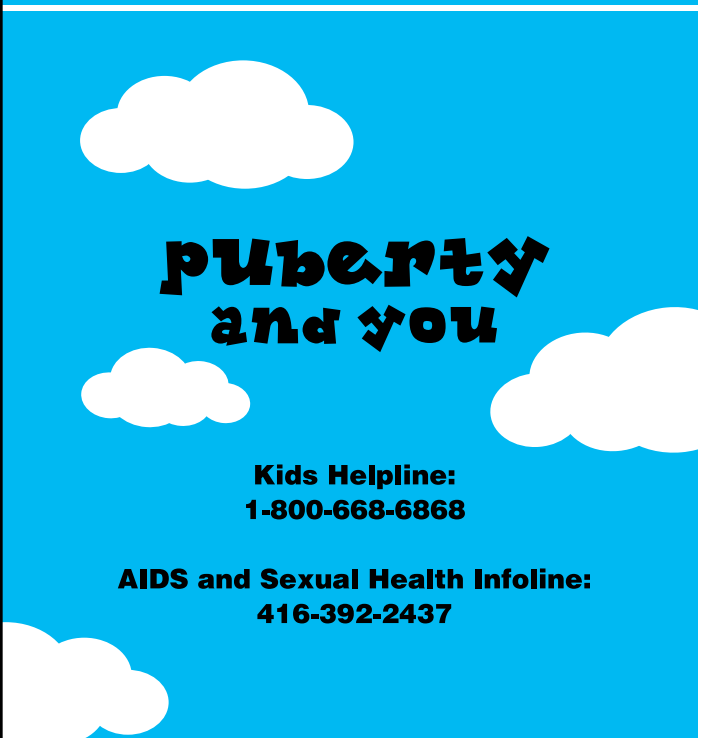




**NO PUBERTY  
AND YOU**



**puberty  
and you**

**Kids Helpline:  
1-800-668-6868**

**AIDS and Sexual Health Infoline:  
416-392-2437**

416.338.7600  
toronto.ca/health



## Girls Only

Many of the physical changes in girls begin in the ovaries—the organ where eggs are stored. The ovaries begin to produce estrogen. When your breasts grow, estrogen makes them feel sensitive. First, there is a little bump behind the nipple, then some swelling under each breast until they reach their final size and shape. Breasts come in all shapes and sizes.

You may also start to have sexual feelings. Your vulva grows and becomes more sensitive to touch, especially the bump inside the top of the vulva called the clitoris. Some girls may touch and rub their genitals for sexual pleasure. This is called masturbation or self-pleasuring. If they touch and rub until they have a very strong, pleasurable sensation, this is called orgasm. Most girls don't ejaculate fluid when they have orgasm, but some do.

You may start to notice a slippery substance coming from the vagina that leaves a little white or yellow stain on your underwear. This is called vaginal discharge or mucus. It's one of the signs that you will probably get your first period within a year. Girls should only wash the outside of the vulva. The wetness inside the vagina keeps it clean.

At some point, an ovary will release one of the thousands of eggs girls are born with. This is called ovulation. The egg lives for about 24 hours and then dissolves. Hormones send messages to the uterus to build up a lining of blood and tissue so that



if an egg is fertilized by sperm, the growing cells will be able to attach themselves to this lining. If the egg isn't fertilized, the lining trickles out of the vagina. This flow of blood is called menstruation or your period. Ovulation usually happens about once a month. Two weeks after ovulation, the period starts. Most girls are not 'regular' when they first start getting their period. Some women never are.

When you get your period, you need to use something to absorb the blood so it doesn't stain your clothes. Some girls use pads; some use tampons. Pads are worn in the underwear. Tampons are put inside the vagina to absorb the blood before it comes out of the body.

## Making Babies

Not everyone wants to or can make a baby, but, with puberty, your body is maturing so that you could make a baby.

When adults want to make a baby, one egg has to join with one sperm. How does that happen? A sperm can fertilize an egg during sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. This is also called making love or having sex. People have sexual intercourse for all kinds of reasons, not just to make a baby.

When a man and a woman want to make a baby, they get sexually excited. His penis gets erect and her vagina becomes wet. When they are both ready, he slides his erect penis into her vagina. One of them or both will have that intense, pleasurable feeling called orgasm. When he has orgasm, he ejaculates semen into her vagina. If there are sperm in the woman just after an egg has been released, she may get pregnant. Only one out of millions of sperm can fertilize an egg. If it does, the cells of the egg divide and grow, and travel down the Fallopian tube into the uterus. If this group of cells attaches to the lining of the uterus, then the woman is pregnant.

## Feelings Change Too

There are also emotional changes during puberty. It's common to be moody, to get upset or to cry for no reason. You may fight with friends or start changing friends as your interests change. You may feel awkward, because some parts of your body, like your feet, grow quicker than others.

You may also have crushes on or romantic feelings about other people. It may be someone you know or someone you don't know, like a celebrity, someone the same age or older, someone of the same sex as you or of the opposite sex. You may start to have sexual feelings, thoughts or fantasies.

Puberty is a time when you are trying to figure out who you are: your values, feelings, whom you are attracted to (male, female or both) and how to be attractive in return. You may have problems with friends or family or worry about school-work. It's important to find someone to talk to when you are worried. Friends, family, and teachers can help you. If you don't feel comfortable talking with someone you know, you can call the Kids Helpline: 1-800-668-6868.

## What can you do to feel good during puberty?

- Remember that it's normal to put on weight during puberty. You're growing and your body shape is changing.
- Regular baths or showers will wash away sweat. Using deodorant can help reduce underarm smells during the day.
- Washing your face every day with warm water will help reduce the oils on your face that can cause pimples and blackheads.
- To look good and feel well, eat healthy food, be active, and get involved in activities at school and in your neighbourhood.

## Puberty— What's It All About?

Puberty is an important time in your life: you experience the changes that take you from being a child to being an adult. Many of these changes affect your body, but they also affect your thoughts and feelings too. Your teenage years are called adolescence.

While every person is unique, puberty usually begins between the ages of eight and 16 and lasts from two to six years. Often puberty starts earlier in girls than in boys. There is nothing you can do to speed it up or slow it down. Everyone changes when their own body is ready.



## How does puberty start?

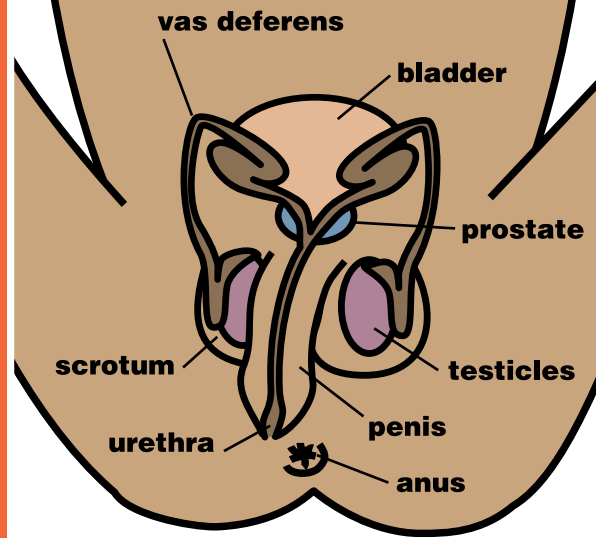
Hormones cause these changes. Hormones are chemical messages that travel through the bloodstream. The pituitary gland, at the base of the brain, releases these hormones. When the time is right for you, it sends hormonal messages to the ovaries in a girl and to the testicles in a boy.

These are two of the reproductive organs.

- The ovaries are where girls' eggs (ova) are stored. When the ovaries receive the hormone, they start to make their own hormones called estrogen and progesterone. Girls also produce some testosterone.
- The testicles are where sperm is made. When the testicles receive the hormone, they start to make their own hormone called testosterone. Boys also produce some estrogen.

When the ovaries and testicles start to produce their own hormones, changes start to happen.

## Male Sexual Organs



Boys' shoulders will widen, and their bodies will become more muscular. At the same time their voices will become deeper and their genitals will enlarge.

Some girls become more muscular, especially if they work out. Their hips widen and their breasts may begin to develop. Their voices change and their genitals grow and change in appearance too. Girls may also notice an increase in body fat. This is normal. If you ever have questions or concerns about your weight, talk it over with a parent, teacher, nurse or doctor. One to two years after a girl's breasts start to develop, she will have her first menstrual period.

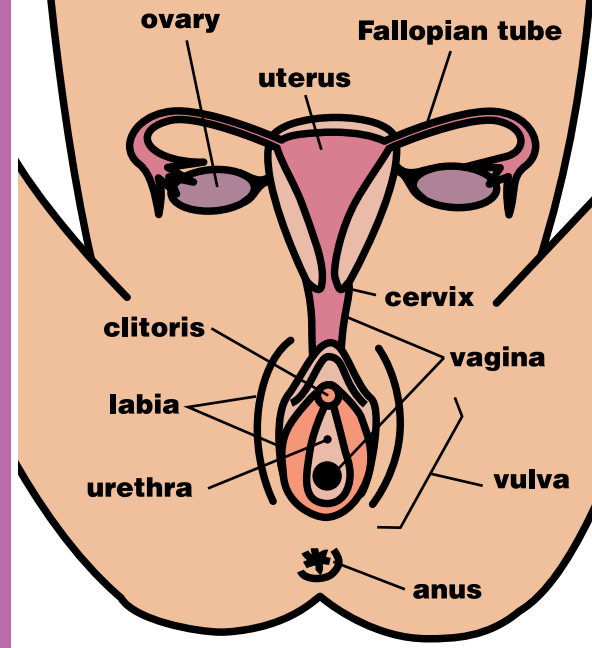
## Are the changes the same for boys and for girls?

Yes. Most of the changes are the same for boys and girls. Both boys and girls grow taller and become heavier. The voice becomes deeper, especially in boys.

You may sweat more, especially under the arms; the sweat now has an odour.

One of the early signs that puberty has begun is hair growth. The body hair on your arms and legs may become darker and thicker. New hair begins to grow under the arms and around the penis in boys, and on the vulva in girls. Boys may notice more hair on their upper lip, chin and cheeks. Some girls may notice this too. The skin on the face and the hair follicles start to produce more oil. When pores get blocked with oil and dirt, you may get blackheads and then pimples (zits).

## Female Sexual Organs



The testicles (balls) produce testosterone, and the penis gets thicker and longer. Every male is unique and so is his penis. Penises come in all shapes and sizes. All boys are born with skin that covers the head of the penis, but some penises are circumcised. This means their family ask a doctor to remove it, usually when the boy is a baby.

Boys have erections from the time they are babies. The penis gets hard and stiff and sticks out from the body. You will probably notice that you are getting erections more frequently. This can happen when you're thinking about someone you are attracted to or sometimes for no reason at all. All boys have erections when they sleep. When you wake up, you may find some sticky stuff on your pyjamas or sheets. When this happens, we call it a wet dream. The fluid that comes out is called semen. This means you have started to produce sperm. You can't see the sperm, but they are in the fluid. The sperm travel from your testicles, pick up fluid from glands along the way and then come out through your penis. This is called ejaculation.

Some boys touch and rub the penis for pleasure. This is called masturbation or self-pleasuring. Then, if they suddenly have a very strong, pleasurable feeling called orgasm, they may ejaculate. This is another way to tell that you are producing sperm.

*Continued on reverse*

## How much will I grow during puberty?

Your body also produces growth hormones. They make the body grow larger; sometimes very quickly. Arms and legs get longer. Your internal body organs grow too. Once puberty starts, your body will show major changes over the next two or three years.

Some people may grow up to 10 cm (4 inches) in one year during a 'growth spurt'. As your body grows taller it will change in other ways too. You will gain weight, and your overall shape will change.

## More Questions?

Talking to people who understand what you're going through can help make these changes less stressful. If you have questions, speak to someone you feel comfortable going to for help: maybe a parent, an older brother or sister, a relative or a teacher.

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