



Introduction to Puberty

What is puberty?

Puberty is a time when our body **matures** and transitions from childhood to adulthood. This is a natural process that happens to everyone in their own unique ways. People's bodies will change physically, but there are also social and emotional changes that happen.

Puberty is the process of a person's body becoming sexually mature

Puberty happens because of **sex hormones**. Sex hormones cause body parts to start changing and growing. Some body parts that change during puberty are ovaries, testes, penis, vulva/vagina, and breasts.

These changes can be emotionally difficult, confusing, or uncomfortable for some people, these feelings are common.



When does puberty happen?

Puberty often begins when a person is between the ages of 9 and 14 years old. For many people, puberty takes around 4 years and is usually complete by the age of 18. It is important to remember that everyone's body is different and changes at its own pace. Puberty may begin sooner for some, and later for others, and that is okay!



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What are the physical, emotional, and social changes that happen during puberty?

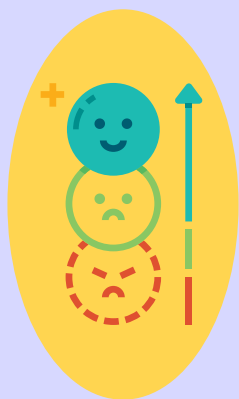
Physical changes affect the body

Physical changes a person may experience during puberty include: changes in body shape and size, the sound of their voice, hair growth in new areas on their body, reproductive and sexual body parts functioning in new ways.



Emotional changes affect how people feel

Emotional changes a person may experience during puberty include: new romantic or sexual feelings, discomfort and sensitivity with their body, new emotions that can happen or change fast and are intense feeling (irritated, happy, mad, aggressive, sad, excited, joyful, etc).



Social changes affect how people interact with others

Social changes that people may experience during puberty include: changing social relationships, increasing influence from friends, changing relationships with family, seeking independence, and seeking responsibility.





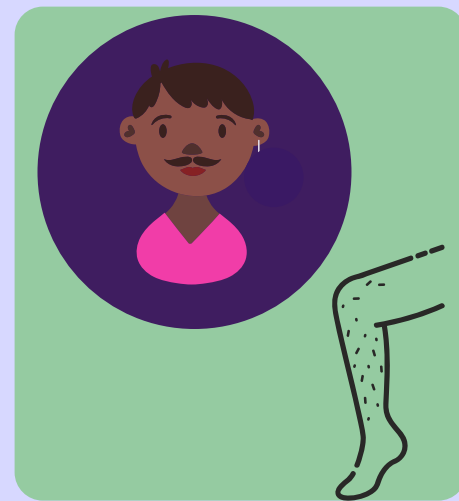
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Changes to the body:

People grow body hair in new places...

This body hair may grow on the arms, legs, armpits, face, and genitals. Some people choose to remove their body hair, and others do not. This is a personal choice!

Hair that grows around the genitals is called pubic hair, and is usually darker and thicker than hair on other parts of the body.



The look and feel of skin may change...



Puberty may cause acne (pimples) to appear on the face, back, or chest. Acne is a common part of puberty and will often go away when puberty is finished. If a person has severe acne, they can talk to their doctor about it.

Puberty also causes people to sweat more. Sweat can cause body odour (or B.O.) often in the underarm area. Some people wear deodorant on their underarms, and people may have to wash their body more often.



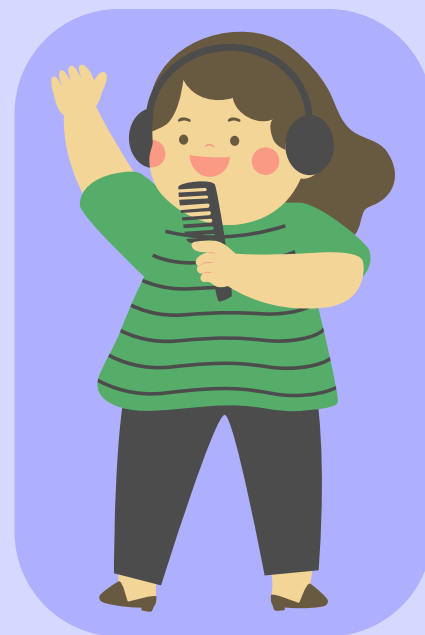
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Changes to the body:

The pitch and depth of the voice may change...

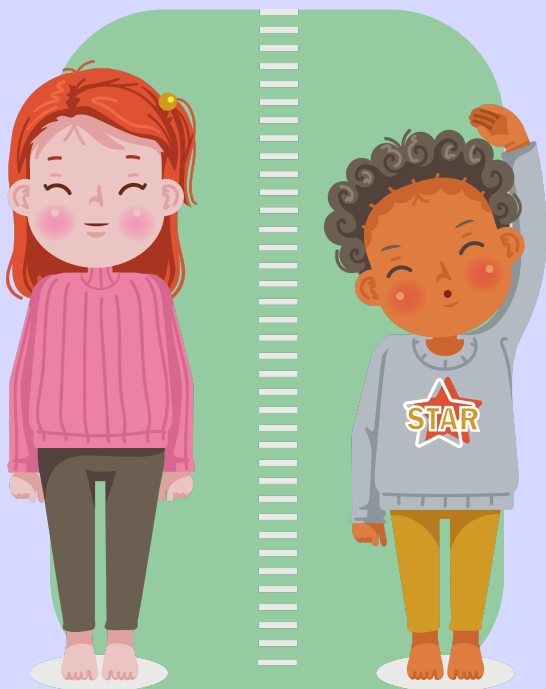
Puberty may make a person's voice crack and sound deeper. A voice crack is a sudden change in pitch in a person's voice. This most often happens to people with penises. This is common, and the voice cracks go away on their own.

As a person goes through puberty, their voice box, or larynx, gets bigger, and their vocal cords lengthen and thicken, causing their voice to sound deeper.



Body size will change...

During puberty people's bodies, arms, legs, hands, and feet grow bigger! Most people gain weight to help with all the growth that is happening to their body. Some body parts may grow faster than others, this is common. Some people may feel clumsy or uncoordinated while they adjust to the ways their body has grown and changed.



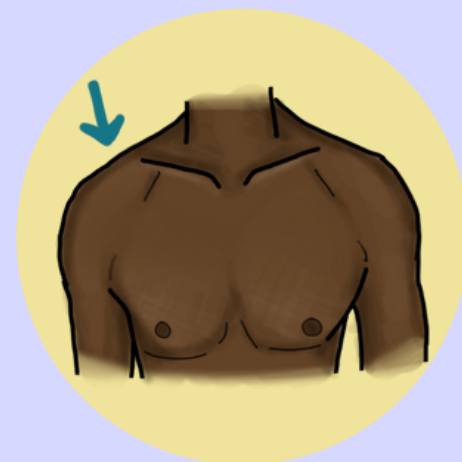


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Puberty for a person with a penis

The body will begin to change shape...

Puberty will make the body change shape. The person will grow taller, their shoulders will get broader, and they will grow more muscle and fat. These changes can make people's weight change, this is common.



The penis and testes will grow and begin to produce sperm...

Puberty will make the penis and testes grow bigger. The person will also begin to experience erections. An erection is an increase in blood flow to the penis that will make it hard and stiff. When experiencing an erection, ejaculation may also occur. This involves a liquid called semen coming out of the tip of the penis. Semen contains sperm. Sperm is a reproductive cell in the body of a person with a penis. This is a healthy and natural part of puberty.

Wet dreams may also occur. This happens when the person gets an erection and ejaculates while sleeping. This is very common among people with penises and will happen less often as the person ages.



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Puberty for a person with a vulva/vagina

The body will change shape...

Their breasts and nipples will get bigger. Their hips will widen, and their waist may get smaller. One breast may be bigger than the other, this is common. These changes usually make people's weight change, that is okay, this is a natural process.

The person may decide to wear a bra. A bra is a piece of clothing worn to support and cover the breasts. There is no specific age or breast size that tells someone when to wear a bra. Deciding when and if a person wants to wear a bra is a personal decision based on comfort.

Menstruation will begin...

Menstruation or **periods**, often begin between the ages of 9-14.

Menstruation/periods happen when the uterus sheds its lining. Blood and tissue from the uterus lining flow through the vagina and exit the body at the vaginal opening. Periods usually last for 2-7 days. There are many different menstrual products people use to catch the blood flow. The products a person chooses to use is a personal choice and often based on comfort.

