

PUBERTY

Puberty is the time when your body changes from a child's body to an adult body. These changes allow the body to physically be able to **reproduce**. Puberty usually begins between the ages of 9 and 16. **Girls usually start puberty 1-2 years before boys do.**



1. Physical Changes:

During puberty, glands in your body begin to produce **hormones** – chemicals that cause the body changes of puberty. Hormones signal the different parts of the body to grow and develop.

In both girls and boys, puberty begins when a part of the brain called the **pituitary gland** releases hormones called **gonadotropins**, which signal other organs in the body to develop and start releasing their own hormones. The 2 main hormones that help female bodies to grow and change are **estrogen and progesterone**. The main hormone in males is **testosterone**. Women make testosterone too, but males make about 10 times more testosterone than men. Men also make estrogen and progesterone, but women make about 10 times more estrogen and testosterone than men.

Physical Changes in Boys (Start around 11 – 16)	Physical Changes in Girls (Start around 9 – 14)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shoulders get broader. ▪ Muscles grow. ▪ Voice gets deeper. ▪ Hair grows on under arms, on arms, legs, chest and face. ▪ Hair grows around the penis and testicles (pubic area). ▪ Penis and testicles grow larger. One testicle usually hangs lower than the other. This is normal. ▪ Sperm cells are produced. ▪ Boys' breasts may feel tender and grow a little. This is normal and goes away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hips get wider. ▪ Waist gets smaller. ▪ Hair grows on under arms, on arms, legs. ▪ Hair grows around the vagina (pubic area). ▪ Breasts develop. One breast is sometimes larger than the other. This is normal. ▪ Ovaries and egg cells develop ▪ Vagina makes a white, sticky fluid. This is the vagina's way of cleaning itself and is normal. ▪ Menstruation ("having periods") starts any time from age 9 to 16.

Physical Changes in Both Boys and Girls

- Grow very quickly.
- Sometimes feel clumsy.
- Sweat more and have body odor (B.O.)
- Get oily skin and acne (pimples)
- Aching muscles and joints ("growing pains")

2. Emotional Changes:

Your body isn't all that changes. Your feelings change, too. The same hormones that triggered your body to change can cause you to be more emotional and have ups and downs in your feelings. Quick mood changes can be hard to handle.

Sooner or later, most young people worry about their bodies and their feelings. Boys and girls who begin puberty before everyone else may feel self-conscious and wish they were more like others. Those who start puberty late may feel jealous of their more "grown up" friends and worry they will never catch up.

It's not fun to feel different from your friends, but in a few years, the changes even out. Remember that each body is different. Each person has a unique personal time clock that determines when he or she will start puberty. Some people will mature earlier and some later.

As a child, you probably didn't spend much time wondering about your own thoughts and feelings. Now you are probably asking yourself questions: "*Who am I?*" or "*What is important to me?*" You are trying to sort out your unique identity and what values or standards you want to live by. At times you may seem like a stranger to yourself.

3. Social Changes:

As you grow older, you find that friends become more important. You want to be liked. You want to fit in. But sometimes you may feel left out and lonely. Almost everyone does.

Find friends who like you for yourself. Be open to making new friends and letting other friends go. If you feel that you don't fit in, changing friends may be the key.

You may also produce romantic feelings towards others. This is normal too. It is important to learn how to express these feelings in ways that are appropriate, respectful of others, and protective of yourself.

Often, adolescents have problems at home during these years. You want a new, more adult relationship with your family, but are unsure how to get it. This is a time of change for your parents too. They must learn how to live with you as a more grown up person. It can be difficult at times on all of you.

4. You are not Alone

The changes of puberty happen slowly. Growing up will take months and even years. Each one of us has our own way of growing and developing – a way that is just right for us. Take good care of your health. Eat well. Get enough rest. Exercise. Keep yourself clean. This will help you to look and feel good.

Think about the person you want to become. This can help you make personal choices that are right for you.

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

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1. What is puberty? How does it begin in the body?

2. When does puberty usually happen for girls? For boys?

3. Summarize the changes that happen during puberty in the table below:

Physical Changes in Boys	Physical Changes in Girls

4. Describe at least three emotional or social changes that happen during puberty.
