



# Puberty (for Kids)

## What is Puberty?

Puberty is the name for the time when your body begins to develop and change as you move from kid to adult. Things like growing body hair and getting taller. During puberty, your body will grow faster than at any other time in your life, except for when you were a baby. The changes in puberty are physical but also emotional.

*Puberty is perfectly normal and happens to everyone!*

## How Does My Gender Play a Part?

Most people biologically, meaning how your body is built, fall into two sexes; male and female. Males are people with penises and females are people with vaginas. The sex you are, whether you have a penis or vagina, determines certain changes that you will go through during puberty.

However, just because you were born with a vagina doesn't make you a "girl" and having a penis doesn't make you a "boy." For most people that is the case, but if you don't have to feel like the sex you were born. How you feel is called your gender, it is how you identify, and you can feel like a boy, girl, both or neither. You may already know how you identify, or you may figure this out in the future. This is all normal and is a part of growing up.

## What Happens During Puberty?

Puberty usually starts for people with penises between 9 and 15 and between 8 and 13 for people with vaginas. This wide range explains why some of your friends still look like young kids and others may look more like adults. If you think you are starting puberty really early or really late talk to your parents or a doctor.

During puberty a gland in your brain, called the pituitary gland, begins secreting hormones. These hormones act all over your body.

In people with penises one of these hormones tells the testicles to begin producing sperm and a hormone called testosterone, which is responsible for making these people look like men.

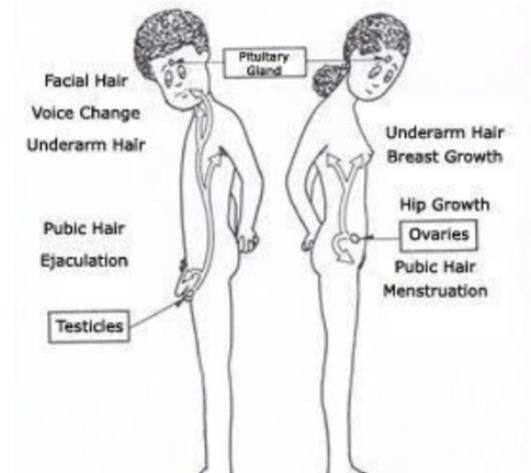
In people with vaginas this same hormone works on organs called the ovaries, you can't see these as they are inside the body. The ovaries produce a hormone called estrogen which makes these people look like women and start menstruating (getting periods).

If you don't think you want to start looking more like a man or woman, because that isn't the gender you identify with, talk to your parents about seeing a doctor who may be able to delay puberty and these changes.

## What Are the Physical Changes?

Changes all children go through are;

- Arms, legs and feet growing faster than the rest of your body.
- Making more sweat and oil on your skin.
- Body odor.
- Acne.
- Voices changes, particularly if you have a penis.
- Getting taller.
- Weight gain. This is normal and there is no need to diet.



If you have a penis changes you can expect are;

- Your penis growing longer and thicker and your testicles getting larger.
- Hair on the arms, legs, face, and possibly chest.
- Your body has started producing sperm so you may ejaculate during an erection.
- You may grow broader and start looking more like an adult man.

If you have a vagina changes you can expect are;

- Your breasts will start to grow, often before other changes. It is normal for one breast to be bigger than the other and they will likely even out with time.
- Hair growth in the pubic region, underarms and legs.
- You will get your first period, called menstruation, between ages 9 and 14.
- Your hips may grow wider and your waist may look smaller.

## What Are the Other Changes?

During puberty your hormones are changing, and your brain is growing. This may lead to you experiencing different emotions like a short temper and mood swings. This is normal.

You may also start to feel differently towards your peers, feeling shyer or more out-going. This is because puberty is a normal time to start getting sexual or romantic feelings towards other people. These feelings can be towards friends, classmates, famous people or characters, this is all normal. You can have these feelings for people of other genders than you, the same gender or all genders.

These sexual feelings may make you feel different physically and you may want to touch yourself. This is called masturbation and is totally normal. If you have a penis these feelings may cause you to ejaculate at night while your sleeping, you may have heard this called "wet dreams". Masturbation is also normal for people with vaginas. Feel free to explore your body, however if other people want to touch you like this, especially an adult, you should say no and tell an adult you trust. Touching your penis, vagina or breasts is private.

The changes during puberty can lead to bullying. There are many forms of bullying; verbal, physical, indirect (rumours), cyber bullying and exclusion. If you see or experience any of these forms of bullying, you should tell an adult like your teacher or a parent.

Even though emotional changes during puberty are normal some feelings aren't normal. If you ever feel so sad or angry you feel like you'll never be happy, or even want to hurt yourself or others, you should talk to an adult or doctor, they can help.

## **Sexual Health Questions? We Have Answers!**

**Location:**

47 St. Clare Avenue

**Hours:**

Monday: 9am – 4:30pm

Tuesday: 9am – 4:30pm

Wednesday: 9am – 4:30pm

Thursday: 12pm – 6pm

Friday: 9am – 4:30pm

**Phone:**

579-1009

Toll free 1-877-NO MYTHS

(1-877-666-9847)

**Website:**

[www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com](http://www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com)

**Email:**

[pp.nlshc@gmail.com](mailto:pp.nlshc@gmail.com)

**Revised August 2020**