

Always changing & growing up

The image features a close-up of a young boy with dark skin and short hair, smiling broadly and showing his teeth. He is wearing a blue collared shirt. In the background, a young girl with light skin is also smiling, though she is out of focus. The background of the entire image is a vibrant red at the top, transitioning into a blue wave-like shape that separates the text from the photo. Below the photo, there is a blue wave-like shape that contains a green oval with the text 'Always Changing® Boy's Guide'. The bottom of the image has a blue background with a pattern of light blue circles.

Always Changing®
Boy's Guide

Questions about puberty?

Try talking with your dad

...or with another adult you trust, like your older brother, grandfather, uncle, mom, coach, doctor or nurse.

Asking questions about “private stuff” isn’t always easy, but here are some tips that might help:

- Ⓢ Remember, it’s normal to feel awkward or embarrassed.
- Ⓢ If your dad seems busy, just say, “There’s something I’d like to ask you about when you have time.” This way you won’t keep putting off the discussion.
- Ⓢ You don’t have to learn everything at once. One question at a time is a great way to start.
- Ⓢ Show your dad or other trusted adult this booklet, and ask him to look through it with you.

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What's happening?

This is a booklet about growing up. Now that you're growing up, you'll probably notice that your body is changing in all sorts of ways. You'll notice changes in the way you look and also in the way you feel. This is because you're going through a stage called puberty. This is an exciting time – it's when you start to change from being a boy to becoming a man.

Puberty for boys usually starts between the ages of 10 and 17, and lasts for a few years.

Everyone is different, though, and it doesn't matter when you start – your body will decide when the time is right.

Don't worry

These changes won't suddenly happen overnight. You'll notice that some happen quickly, but others take place slowly over a few years.

New words?

All the words in **orange bold type** are defined in the glossary on pages 22 and 23.

This booklet will tell you about all the changes to expect during puberty. It will also answer many of the questions you might want to ask. Just remember that puberty is a normal and healthy part of life – and it happens to everyone!

Growing up & out

Puberty starts when a gland just beneath the front of your brain – the **pituitary gland** – sends a signal for your body to start making some special chemicals. One of these chemicals – or **hormones** – is called **testosterone**, and it is produced in your **testicles**. Testosterone is responsible for many of the changes that are beginning to happen. Females have a different hormone responsible for their body changes. It's called **estrogen**.

You'll know you are starting to go through puberty when you suddenly start to grow taller. You will also notice that your muscles will develop, your chest will become broader, and you'll probably start to gain weight. Don't worry if your friends seem to be growing more quickly than you. You'll soon catch up.

Don't worry

Some of these changes don't sound like a great deal of fun – who wants body odor, oily hair and pimples? But they are all normal, and can be managed with good hygiene habits. Remember, your body is your responsibility. Treat it with respect.

Boys go through many changes during puberty. The main ones are:

- ☆ Your body grows taller.
- ☆ Your muscles develop and your chest gets broader.
- ☆ Your body may sweat more and you will develop body odor.
- ☆ Your hair may become more oily.
- ☆ Your skin may become oily and pimples may develop.
- ☆ Hair starts to grow under your arms, on your legs, in the pubic area around the base of your **penis**, on your face and sometimes on your chest.
- ☆ Your voice begins to sound deeper and may “crack” as you talk.
- ☆ Your penis and testicles become bigger and sperm begins to be produced.

How do I get my parents to accept that I'm almost an adult?

Even preteens feel grown up, so you may resent the fact that your parents still see you as a child. When you disagree with them about being ready for new responsibilities, talking honestly with them about your disagreement is the only way to resolve it. Puberty can be difficult for parents, too. Be patient as you prove you're ready for more responsibility, and negotiate with your parents for more freedom.

Body growth

Is it normal to put on weight during puberty?

Definitely. An adult man has a broader and more muscular body than a young boy. Puberty is not a good time to limit the amount of food you eat. You are meant to put on weight during puberty because your body is growing. As long as you eat healthy and stay active, there shouldn't be any need to worry about your weight. You are likely to put on more weight than your body needs only if you eat too many fatty and sugary foods and don't get enough exercise.

Help – I think I'm growing breasts.

Don't worry, you're not turning into a girl. It's normal for boys to have some swelling around the breasts and nipples. This area can also feel a bit sore. It won't last for long and will soon go away.

Why do some parts of the body mature more quickly than others?

Growth of the testicles is typically the earliest sign of puberty, but body changes can occur in a different order and still be normal. There's also a wide range of individual differences in the growth of other parts of the body – feet, hands, shoulders, legs, etc. Many different growth patterns are normal; everybody – and every body – is unique.

How tall will I be?

It's difficult to predict, but height is usually determined by heredity – how tall your parents and grandparents are. If both parents are tall, chances are you will be tall. If both parents are short, you may be shorter. But this is not always true – everybody is different. Occasionally, a boy will continue to grow or get another growth spurt in his late teens.

Does a lot of body hair mean you have more testosterone?

No, testosterone is the hormone that starts the body hair growing. How much hair you have is determined by your racial/ethnic group and heredity.

Voice

As you mature, your voice will deepen. You may experience your voice “cracking” or changing pitch in mid-sentence. That's because your vocal cords are growing and changing just like the rest of you.

Don't worry

If you have some questions, it's always good to talk to someone. The best person is probably your dad or your mom. But if you don't feel comfortable talking to them, choose another older person you trust – an uncle, a friend's parent, a teacher or coach, a school nurse. You could also talk to an older brother or friends at school, if they've already experienced some of the changes of puberty themselves.



Feeling good in your skin

During **puberty** the oil glands in your skin become more active, producing excess amounts of an oily substance called **sebum**. Skin care is especially important during this time.

Acne – What is it?

Acne (“pimples”) is a natural occurrence. It starts when the skin’s pores become blocked with dead skin cells and sebum, which slows down or stops the flow of sebum to the skin surface. Bacteria can then develop in the clogged pore, causing a pimple.

Doctors describe acne as:

- **Mild** – A few pimples on the face, back or chest. Most teenagers usually experience this type of acne. It can be treated with products bought from a supermarket or pharmacy.
- **Moderate** – Around 20 to 60 small- to medium-size pimples over the face, back or chest. It can be treated by a family doctor.
- **Severe** – This type of acne is rare and is treated by a family doctor or specialist (dermatologist).



Tips 'n' Tricks

For taking care of your skin:

- Help prevent acne by establishing a twice-daily cleansing routine with a medicated acne wash or cleanser.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Take good care of your general health and well-being.
- Don't squeeze, pick or pop pimples. This can make them worse and cause scarring.
- Be patient. Don't expect acne to disappear overnight.

Body hair, facial hair and shaving

Hair will start to grow under your arms, on your legs, in the pubic area around the base of your penis, on your face and perhaps on your chest. At some point you'll probably want to start shaving the hair on your face, but that will be your decision.



Some men like to shave off the fine hair that grows first. Others prefer to wait until the hair becomes darker and thicker. It may be some time before you'll need to shave every day.

When will I shave?

It depends on how soon your facial hair appears and how thick it becomes, as well as your personal preference. Generally, heavy facial hair doesn't develop until later in puberty, maybe not until you're 16 or older.

Healthy hair

Just as you look after your skin, you should also look after your hair and scalp. Healthy hair is all about choosing the right hair care products – and using them right.

Nourish and protect your hair

Develop a routine for taking care of your hair, just as you do for your skin. It's simple: just use a good shampoo, followed by a conditioner, every time you wash your hair.

- A good shampoo not only cleans your hair, it can also help protect your hair from damage and can nourish it too.
- A conditioner untangles your hair and makes it easier to manage. It can also help keep it moisturized and protect it from damage.



Did you know?

- We have about 5 million hairs all over our body – and 100,000 hairs on our head.
- Hair grows more during the day than at night – and more in summer than in winter.
- Most people lose between 50 and 150 hairs from their head every day.
- If hair were not replaced as it is shed, we'd be completely bald in 1,000 days.

Tips for healthy hair:

- Shampooing is good for your hair because it helps remove deposits, such as dirt, sebum and styling products.
- Shampoo your hair regularly (daily if you want to) instead of using soap. Shampoos are made specifically to clean hair. If your hair looks or feels dirty between shampoos, you may need to shampoo more often.
- Massage conditioner into your hair with your fingertips, so the conditioner can spread throughout your hair. This will help keep your hair healthy looking and strong.
- If you're a young African-American man, your hair may tend to be dry and delicate. You can protect your hair by shampooing and conditioning it less often, and styling it gently with a wide-tooth comb.
- If your hair is cut very short, use a sunscreen on your scalp or wear a hat to protect against the harmful effects of the sun.

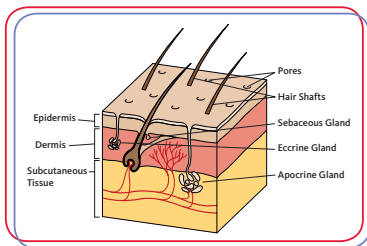


No sweat!

Another body change during puberty is that your sweat glands produce more sweat (perspiration). Perspiration is normal and important – it helps your body regulate its temperature.

You have two different kinds of sweat glands.

The first type – **eccrine glands** – produce perspiration that is clear and odorless. These glands start working at birth. The second type – **apocrine glands** – become active only when you start puberty. They produce a different kind of perspiration that can smell unpleasant when it comes in contact with bacteria on the skin.



A lot of apocrine glands are located under your arms, so many people use underarm deodorants or anti-perspirants to control the smell.

There are four different kinds of products:

Underarm deodorants counteract odor and help you smell good.

Anti-perspirants reduce perspiration and underarm wetness to help prevent odor before it starts. **Deodorants/Anti-perspirants** do the job of both a deodorant AND an anti-perspirant. **Body sprays**, with cologne-like fragrances you can apply to your body, help you smell good everywhere.

Wash regularly – especially after exercise!

To stay looking and feeling your best, take a bath or shower at least once a day. Any time you get sweaty, you should bathe more often. For odor protection, use body wash or soap. Then grab some clean clothes (body odor stays on clothes) and apply deodorant to help keep body odor away. If you are concerned about underarm wetness, try a deodorant/anti-perspirant that not only fights odor but wetness, too.



Did you know?

- Females have more apocrine glands than males.
- All your eccrine glands working at maximum output could produce about 10.5 quarts of perspiration a day!
- You have about 2.5 million sweat glands all over your body, except on your lips and ears.



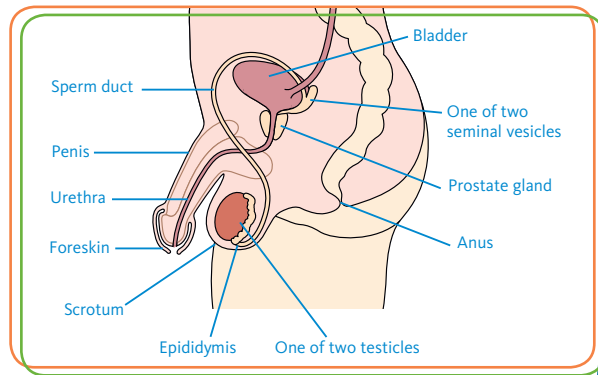
The way *it works*

The reason you have a reproductive system is because it provides the **sperm** needed to fertilize a female's egg, which then can grow to be a baby. During puberty the levels of the hormone testosterone in your body begin to rise. This causes your penis and testicles to get bigger and the testicles to produce sperm. The testicles cannot make sperm before puberty.

Sperm are the male reproductive cells, in the same way that the eggs inside a woman are the female reproductive cells. (The sperm and the egg need to meet to make a baby.) Sperm look like tadpoles, with what appear to be a head and a tail.

Sperm are made in the testicles – which hang outside your body in a sac (scrotum) just beneath your penis. The testicles make a lot of sperm – about 1,000 sperm per second. Sperm are stored in the epididymis, which is the tube you can feel at the back of each testicle.

Sperm are damaged or killed by heat. Because of this, the penis and scrotum hang outside your body to keep the sperm cooler than your body temperature. If you become cold, you may notice that your penis and scrotum shrink. They are drawing themselves



closer to your body to keep warm. When you are hot, they will hang loose, away from your body.

Sperm are released from the testicles and epididymis and move through the sperm ducts toward the penis. Along the way, sperm mix with fluid so they can move more easily. The sperm and this fluid are now called **semen**. It is whitish and sticky. The sperm are too tiny to see – a drop of semen the size of the period at the end of this sentence would contain more than 1,000 sperm.

Semen leaves the penis through the **urethra**. This is the tube that runs through the middle of your penis. Urine also leaves the body through the urethra, but never at the same time as semen.

One of your testicles may be higher than the other.

This is normal. No one is perfectly the same on both sides. Generally the right one is slightly higher than the left one.

Erections

When a boy or man is sexually excited, or sometimes for no reason at all, his penis becomes harder and stands away from his body. This is called an **erection**.

Do men stop having erections when they get older?

No. Healthy males of all ages, from babies to old men, can get erections. The difference is that only after puberty do males produce sperm and semen. Then they produce sperm for the rest of their lives.

Why does it get hard?

It gets hard because the blood vessels in the penis fill with blood when you get excited. It doesn't have any muscles in it, which is why you can't move it around very much. You can get an erection any time your penis is touched or rubbed, you have happy or exciting thoughts, or if you see someone attractive. There are lots of causes for erections, even if you aren't thinking about girls or sex. You can get an erection for no reason at all, even when you don't want to have one, which might take you by surprise!

You might notice a ridge down the back of each testicle.

This is normal. What you feel is the epididymis where the sperm is stored. There is an epididymis down the back of each testicle. If you find any other lumps, you should visit your doctor to get a full checkup.

But don't worry – it's the same for all boys and men. And don't worry that someone will notice – erections are not as noticeable as you think. Try to ignore the erection, and it will go away on its own.

The average ejaculation generally contains more than 40 million sperm.

Does it matter what size your penis is?

Not at all! Penises do vary in length and shape from person to person, but not as much as you may think. Remember, the size of your penis has nothing to do with how manly you are or whether you can become a father.

What is circumcision?

This minor surgical procedure, usually performed soon after birth, removes all or part of the **foreskin** of the penis. The operation is not usually considered medically necessary, but often it is performed for religious or cultural reasons, or because it makes it easier to keep the penis clean. To help prevent the growth of bacteria, uncircumcised boys and men should wash under the foreskin every day.

Ejaculation

Sometimes semen spurts out of the penis. This is called an **ejaculation**. It happens when muscles at the base of the penis start to expand and contract (tighten). This pushes the semen through the urethra and out through the tip of the penis. But this won't happen every time you have an erection.

Wet dreams

Sometimes you can ejaculate when you are asleep. This is called a nocturnal emission, more commonly known as a **"wet dream."** It happens without you knowing about it, and it's not necessarily because you are dreaming about sex. You may notice that your pajamas or sheets feel wet or sticky when you wake up. This is nothing to worry about – most boys have wet dreams.

I have been having wet dreams for a while now. Will they ever stop?

You will experience wet dreams less frequently after your body has gone through puberty. Generally, as you grow older, you will have more control over your body. Some boys experience wet dreams regularly, while others have very few. It is nothing to worry about.



When do I need to wear a jockstrap?

This is a personal decision. As your body changes, you may be more comfortable with an athletic supporter when you swim or participate in other sports. In some sports, boys and men wear a plastic cup to protect their genitals. It can be very painful to be hit on the penis and testicles. Check with a parent, your coach, or a physical education teacher if you have questions.

What is **"jock itch"?**

Jock itch is a skin infection caused by a fungus. Its symptoms can include a scaly, itchy rash in the genital area. To help avoid jock itch, wear clean cotton underwear and loose-fitting pants. Don't use anyone else's towels or clothes. Jock itch can be treated with anti-fungal medications available at the drug store without a prescription. You may want to ask a parent, coach, physical education teacher or school nurse to help you choose the right product. If the rash continues, see your doctor.



Glossary



apocrine glands

Sweat glands (mostly under the arms and in the genital area) that produce perspiration that can mix with bacteria to cause body odor. Apocrine glands become active at puberty.

circumcision

A medical or religious procedure in which a doctor or clergy member cuts away the foreskin from the penis. Circumcision is usually performed during the first few days of a baby's life.

eccrine glands

Sweat glands (all over the body) that produce clear, odorless perspiration. Eccrine glands are active at all ages.

ejaculation

Forceful release of semen from the penis.

erection

Hardening of the penis.

estrogen

Female hormone, produced in the ovaries, that is responsible for many of the changes that take place in females during puberty.

foreskin

This fold of skin covers the end of the penis. A boy who has been circumcised has had his foreskin removed.

hormones

Special chemicals that regulate the growth and activity of body tissues and organs.

penis

The male reproductive organ, also used for urinating.

pituitary gland

A small gland beneath the front of the brain, that is responsible for triggering the production of hormones that start puberty.

puberty

Stage of life when human males and females become capable of reproduction.

sebum

An oily substance (from the sebaceous glands) that helps keep skin moist. During puberty, too much sebum may contribute to acne.

semen

A sticky fluid that contains sperm and various other secretions.

sperm

The male reproductive cell.

testicles

The male reproductive glands, which produce sperm and the male hormone testosterone.

testosterone

The male hormone that is responsible for many of the changes that take place in males during puberty.

urethra

A canal that carries urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. In males the urethra is also the passageway for semen.

wet dream

The ejaculation of semen out of the penis during sleep. This is also called a nocturnal emission.



Want to know
more about puberty?

Check out

www.kidshealth.org – Lots of activities, games and answers to your health questions.

www.brainpop.com – Online movies and more on puberty, health and lots of other topics.

These materials have been reviewed by the American Association for Health Education and accepted as educationally appropriate.

