

UNDERSTANDING PUBERTY

WHAT IS PUBERTY?

Puberty is when your body changes from a child's body into an adult's. It's guided by hormones that help your organs, brain, and body systems mature. By the end of puberty, you are sexually and reproductively mature.

WHEN DOES IT START?

Usually starts around 10 years for girls and 11 years for boys. Some start earlier or later - that's completely normal. Hormone changes can begin even in primary school.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING PUBERTY?

GIRLS



- ✓ Body shape: hips widen, body gets curvier.
- ✓ Height: you'll grow taller
- ✓ Acne: hormonal changes may cause pimples
- ✓ Breasts: start to grow and may feel tender
- ✓ Hair: grows under arms, around pubic area, legs and arms
- ✓ Vaginal discharge: clear or whitish, a normal cleaning process
- ✓ Periods: monthly bleeding when the womb lining sheds
- ✓ Irregular periods & cramps: normal at first - gentle exercise or a heat pack can help

BOYS



- ✓ Boys will get taller and stronger and start to grow muscle.
- ✓ Acne: bumps or pimples may appear
- ✓ Voice: becomes deeper ("voice breaking")
- ✓ Hair: starts on face, underarms, legs, and pubic area
- ✓ Genitals: penis and testicles grow
- ✓ Wet dreams and erections: normal body responses
- ✓ Temporary breast tenderness happens to some boys, goes away later.

EMOTIONAL CHANGES

- ✓ Your child may want more independence or feel self-conscious.
- ✓ Mood swings are common - their hormones are adjusting.
- ✓ They might start having romantic or sexual feelings for others.
- ✓ Everyone grows at their own pace - be patient with them.

SUPPORT AND TALKING IT OUT

It's okay for your child to feel confused or unsure. Talk with:

- ✓ Parents or carers
- ✓ A teacher, doctor, or school nurse
- ✓ Friends you trust

NEED HELP OR SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

- ✓ GP (doctor)
- ✓ Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
- ✓ headspace: 1800 650 980

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