

# TELL ME ABOUT

## THE CHANGES IN MY BODY

Second Edition



### RESOURCES TO SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS, EDUCATORS,  
THE HEALTH CARE TEAM AND OTHER CAREGIVERS

## 1 Adolescence and puberty

SARANNE MEYERSFELD & DEBORAH EWING



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## THE CHANGES IN MY BODY

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## *Tell Me About the Changes in My Body*

Resources to support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

For young people, caregivers, educators, health and social workers

### **1 Adolescence and Puberty**

Saranne Meyersfeld & Deborah Ewing

#### **Illustrations**

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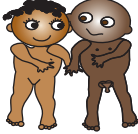
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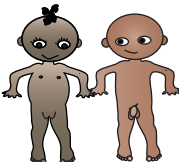
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# INTRODUCTION

This book is about adolescence and puberty.

It explains, in basic words and with light-hearted illustrations, the changes that happen to the body during this time.

Talking about the changes that occur in our bodies and our feelings as we start the process of moving from childhood through adolescence to adulthood does not have to be uncomfortable. If children, parents, teachers and other caregivers, recognise how important it is to understand what is happening, and if we have accurate, straightforward information, these conversations can even be fun.

Sexuality education based on facts and free of judgment is an opportunity to support and affirm children, and celebrate their development into the uniquely beautiful young people they will become.

This book addresses the physical and hormonal changes that everyone goes through but which we all experience in different ways. The theme of diversity is used throughout the book.

We hope that you find the descriptions and the pictures useful and entertaining. They may not answer all of your questions but they will take you a few steps along your journey to being safe and confident in discussing these topics. The illustrations are simple and representational in order to provoke discussion, evoke amusement, dispel embarrassment and normalise the language and ideas.

This series of books aims to provide a solid foundation of knowledge and accurate information about puberty, sexuality, diversity and rights that will enable young people to negotiate relationships safely and responsibly.

The danger lies not in talking about the issues, but in ignorance and curiosity not being addressed.



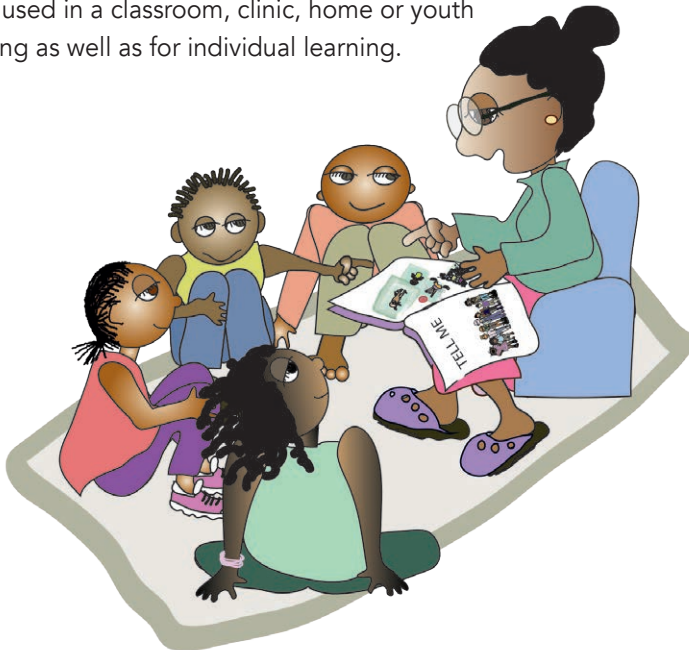
## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book was designed for children aged around 9-14 years but the information is important for everyone. It can be used by older children, adolescents, parents, grandparents, siblings and other caregivers, counsellors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, nurses, doctors and teachers.

You can use this book to get basic information about everything to do with puberty. It will help you to start conversations with others who need this information, or who can explain more to you.

You might find the book useful if you are organising or taking part in a workshop about puberty. We suggest that you first read the book to yourself or with a small group of your peers. Then you can think about how to go through the information with others.

It can be used in a classroom, clinic, home or youth club setting as well as for individual learning.



## GETTING STARTED

If you are a young person reading this book, maybe look at one chapter at a time, or skip to a part that interests you, and ask a trusted adult to answer any questions you may have.

If you are using the book in a group discussion, it can help to talk first about how we usually find out about things to do with puberty and how we feel about that.

If you are an adult, getting started is usually the hardest part. Relax and be yourself. You might start by saying something like: "When I was growing up, I had so many questions about what was happening to me." Young people will feel more comfortable if they realise that most adults have experienced some of the same things.

Listen for cues. The subject of body changes should come up naturally and then it can be casually expanded upon. For example, if you see your child looking at pictures of people doing physical exercise, the subject of getting taller can be used as an introduction. If a child in your family or class loses a tooth, this is also an opportunity to reassure them about how everyone's body changes as they grow. Sometimes these changes make us feel bad. Losing a tooth can be painful. It makes it hard to bite certain foods and it changes the way we look for a while. But it is also a sign of growing up.

It is important to recognise that it is much easier for a child or young adolescent to absorb information a little at a time and that everything cannot be discussed in one conversation. Allow the young person to set the pace, mood and intensity of the discussions. We suggest that you spend about three hours, in sessions of 30-40 minutes, working through each part of the book with the children or adolescents in your care. We recommend you start with the introduction and Part 1. Then you might invite a small group to look at a part that interests them and start a discussion about it. Using role play, games or quizzes is a fun way to share the information or check knowledge.

Laughing with each other – not at each other – is a good way to get over feelings of embarrassment. Talking about puberty not only helps a young person feel better about their body, but allows for an opportunity to boost their self-esteem by affirming their differences and highlighting their shared concerns during this challenging time.

# DIFFERENCES

## Celebrating our differences

Think about it: people come in all shapes, sexes and genders, sizes and personalities. Some people are tall, others are short, some are chubby and others are thin. We have different types of hair – curly, straight, thick, thin, black, brown, blonde, red, orange and grey. Eyes come in different colours: from the darkest brown, to yellow, gold, green and many shades of blue. We have different skin tones too.



The following pages look at some of the ways that different people go through puberty. Let's learn together with honesty and kindness.

**It is important to note that not everyone has typical male or typical female bodies and reproductive organs.**





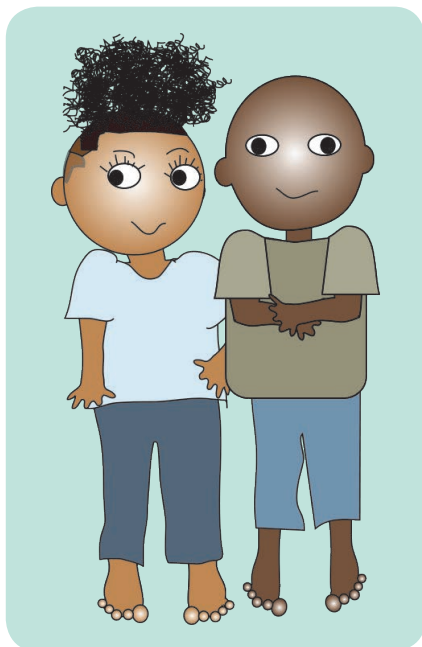
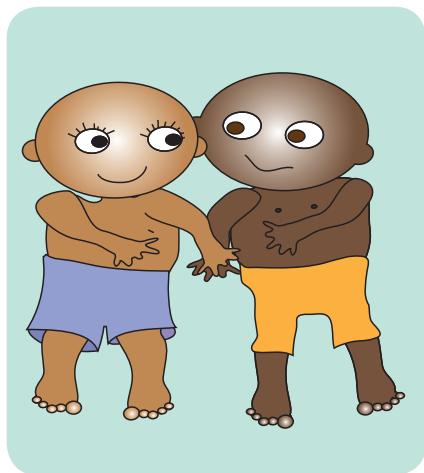
# **PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE**



## WHAT IS ADOLESCENCE?

Adolescence is the state or process of growing up, from being a child to becoming an adult.

During the pre-teen and teen years, young people go through lots of changes as their bodies develop into adult bodies.



## WHEN DOES IT BEGIN?

The process usually begins between nine and 13 years of age (the start of puberty) and continues until 18 or 20 years, but it can happen earlier or later.



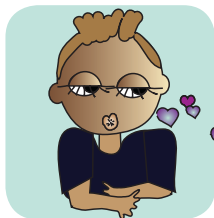
## WHAT IS PUBERTY?

Puberty is when changes start to happen to young people as they move from being children to adults and become sexually mature.



Lots of changes happen and the most noticeable ones are changes to the body.

### Other changes may include new feelings and urges

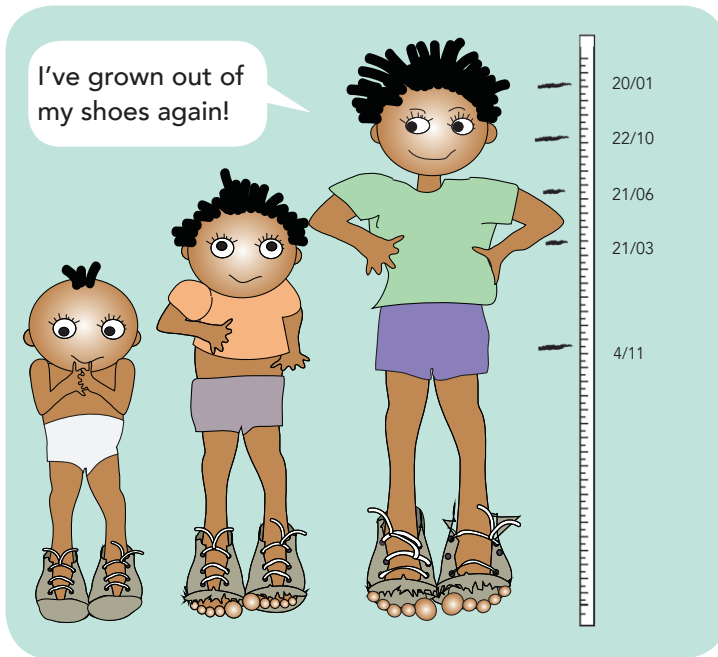


More about feelings and urges on page 72.



## PUBERTY CHANGES

The first sign of puberty is often a growth spurt (suddenly getting taller), but everyone is different. Girls typically start puberty before boys do. The changes depend on your individual **genes** as well your hormones. If you have a disability or illness, this may affect when and how you experience some changes in puberty. No one knows for sure when these changes will start. Developing earlier or later than other people does not mean that there is something wrong. Everybody has their own natural timetable. Bodies develop at their own special rate.



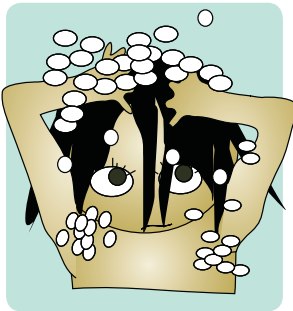
### What are genes?

Inside every cell of each living thing (humans, all animals and plants) are sets of instructions called genes. The genes provide the instructions on what the plant or animal is, what it looks like, how it is to survive, and how it will interact with its environment.

## CHANGES THAT HAPPEN TO ALL OF US

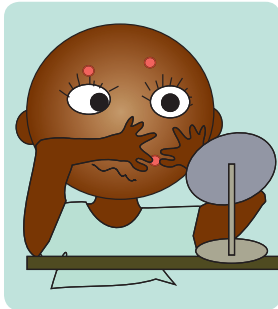
Hormones are like little chemical messengers. They control what is happening in our bodies and they also affect the way we think and feel.

Some hormones cause changes in how we grow. Others affect our immune systems. Hormones even affect whether we feel hot or thirsty! Our bodies start to produce a special set of hormones as we go through puberty.



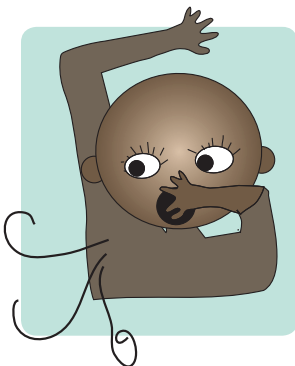
Oil glands in the scalp become more active

Hair can become oilier and might need washing more often



Skin produces more oil

May develop pimples



Sweat glands become more active

Adult body smell develops

## Some information about body odour and sweat

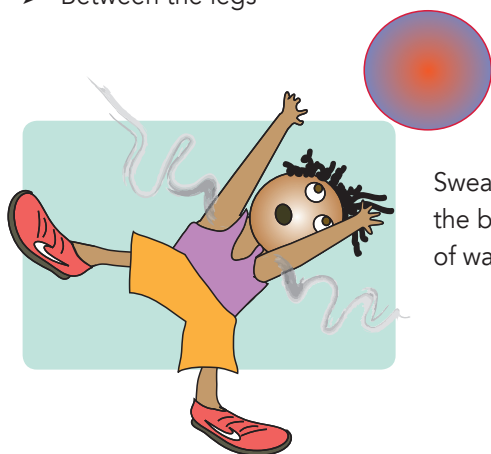
During puberty, sweat glands become more active (produce more sweat). This is called perspiration.

Body areas that have more of these glands are:

- Under the arms
- Palms of the hands
- Under the feet
- Between the legs



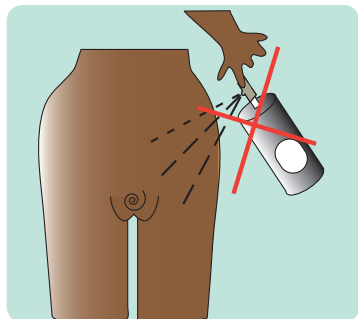
Sweating is healthy. Its main purpose is to help the body keep cool. Sweat is made up mainly of water with a small amount of chemicals.



Sometimes nervousness or anxiety increases sweating. Sweat by itself doesn't smell, but when it mixes with bacteria (germs) and stays on the skin, a smell can develop. To reduce this, wash your body as often as you can.



Deodorants control the underarm odour (smell), but they do not take the place of washing. Make sure you wash yourself thoroughly at least once a day if you can.



Do not use vaginal deodorant sprays

Avoid douching – it is unnecessary and can be harmful

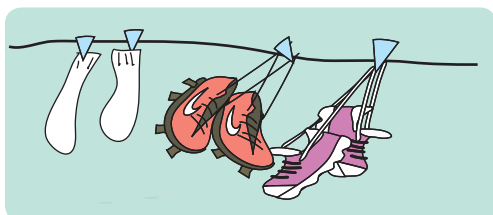
‘Douching’ means washing out the inside of the vagina. The vagina is a self-cleaning organ and regular washing with clean water is enough.



When sweat gets trapped inside shoes, germs (bacteria and fungus) grow. This can cause the rotten smell that sometimes comes from feet and shoes

Ways to help reduce smelly feet:

- Keep your feet clean and dry them well after washing
- Wash your shoes (if washable)
- Dry them before wearing
- Leave shoes to air overnight
- Put powder (corn starch) in your shoes
- Cotton socks are best





# BODY HAIR

## Puberty and hair

The hair all over your body is affected by changes in hormones during puberty.

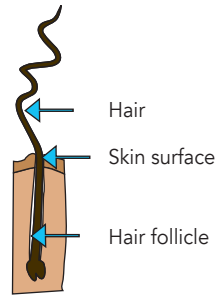
The hair on your head can become oilier and may need to be washed more often.

Hair grows under your arms and in your pubic area.

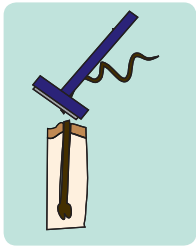
Hair on your arms and legs (and sometimes on your face and chest) becomes thicker and darker. Body hair is normal. It is not unhealthy and is nothing to be embarrassed about.

Some people like to remove the hair from their faces and/or bodies, others don't. It's a personal choice.

If you want to remove, trim or shape facial or body hair, be sure to do it safely. Always use clean instruments and follow instructions.



## Different ways of removing hair

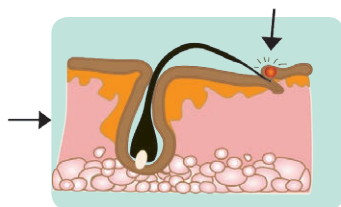


## Shaving

- It cuts hair away at the level of your skin's surface
- Hair will grow out quickly, and will look as though it is darker and thicker
- Always clean razors after use. Never lend/borrow a razor (as it spreads germs)
- Don't pull the razor against the direction of your hair because this can make hair grow back into the skin
- Soften hair by soaking it in warm water
- Use soapy lather or shaving cream/lotion

Skin might burn or sting if you use deodorant right after shaving.

Shaving cuts the hair at an angle, leaving a sharp tip, which can loop back, pierce the skin and grow inwards, causing infections (cysts – big pimples – or fluid under your skin).

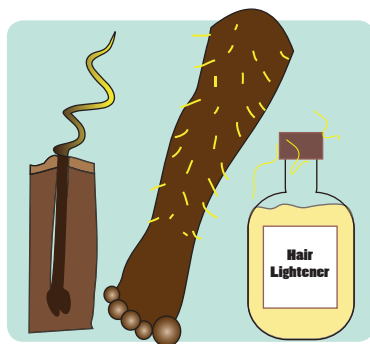
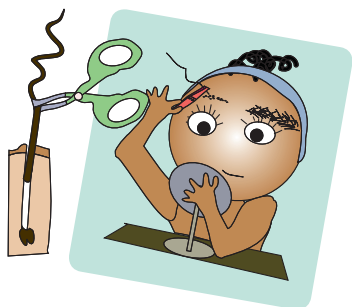


### Cutting, clipping or not shaving at all

The best way to avoid the problem of bumps is not to shave at all. Some people cut their facial hair close to the skin with hairclippers, leaving a little stubble.

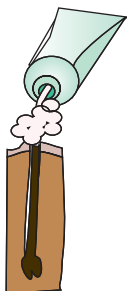
### Bleach

Bleaching lightens the hair but can burn your skin.



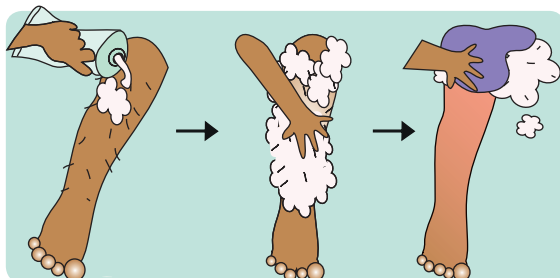
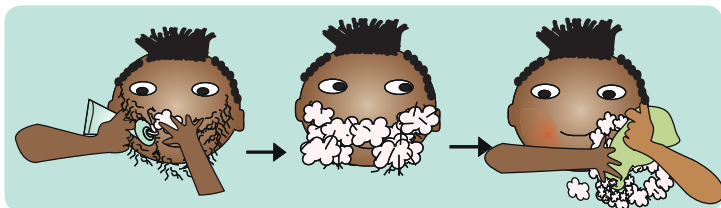
### Plucking

Tweezers pull out hairs one at a time and are best for removing stray hairs. Do not pull hairs from moles.



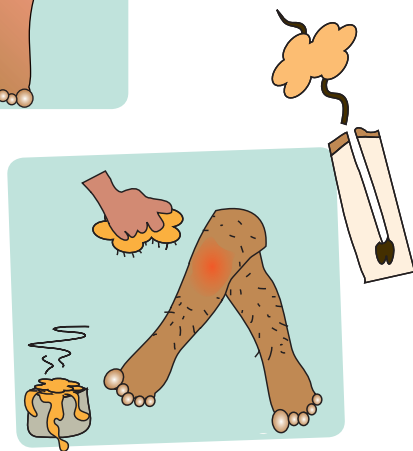
## Hair removal creams

These creams contain chemicals that dissolve hair just below the level of your skin. Follow directions carefully as it can be very irritating for some skins. Always test a small patch and see if any problems occur.



## Waxes

Hot or cold wax is applied to your skin and then pulled off, taking the hairs with it. Hair takes a longer time to grow back as the whole hair is pulled out. Waxing is best done by a professional.



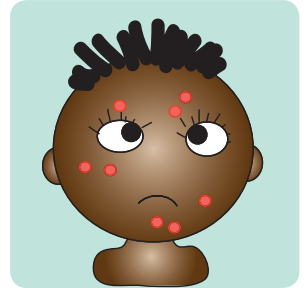
## Electrolysis/laser

This is permanent hair removal done by a trained technician using an electric current to destroy the hair at its root. This method is expensive and quite painful.

## PIMPLES AND ACNE

Lots of teenagers get pimples and acne during puberty but most skin problems improve after puberty.

During puberty, the oil glands underneath the skin start making more oil (called sebum). Sometimes there's too much sebum and this, together with dead skin cells, causes blocked pores on the surface of the skin. (See below).

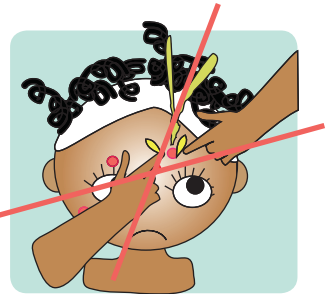


Bacteria (germs) on the skin cause infection and swelling and this results in pimples.



Blocked pores can result in:

- skin coloured bumps - pimples
- black dots on your skin - blackheads – caused by a chemical reaction to the sebum when air reaches it
- white dots on your skin - whiteheads –when the opening is too small for air to cause the chemical reaction



Blackheads and whiteheads are both mild forms of acne.

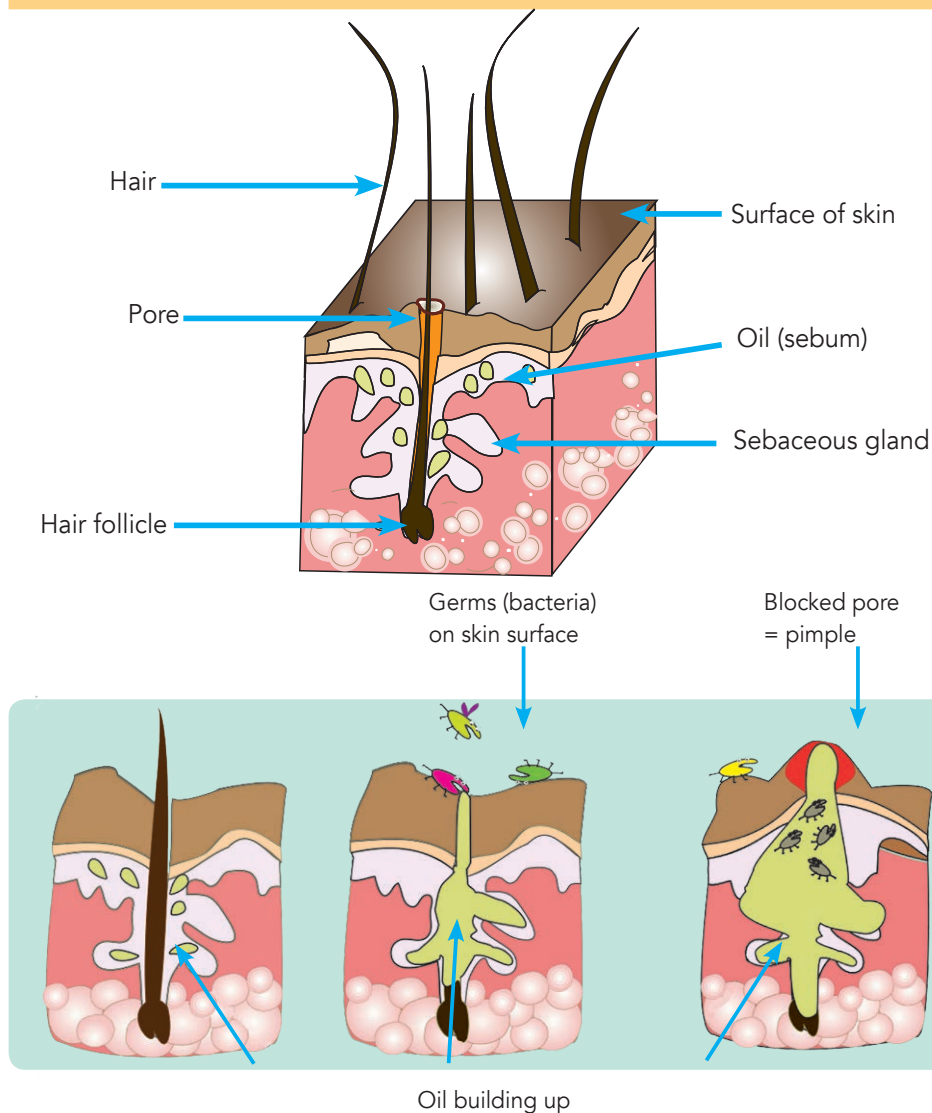
### Some tips:

- Don't squeeze pimples – this can cause scarring
- Drink lots of fresh water
- Avoid oil-based creams and cosmetics – they can clog pores
- Find out about safe acne lotions and creams from the chemist
- Wash your face often but don't scrub it or use abrasives
- Skin may become discoloured by rough soaps/scrubs/skin lightening creams containing harmful chemicals
- Speak to a doctor if your skin problems get bad

## How a pimple develops

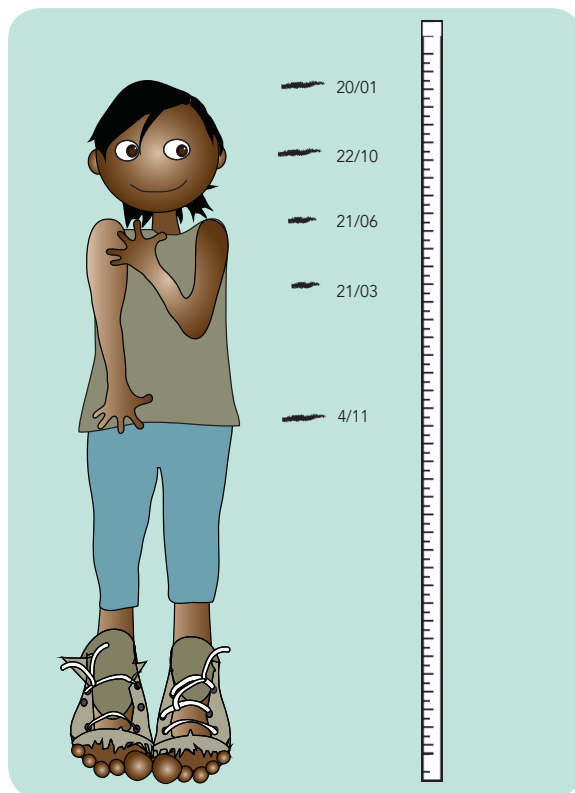
If you could see inside your skin, it would look a bit like this\*

\*not biologically accurate.



## PUBERTY – TYPICAL CHANGES FOR GIRLS

The first sign of puberty is often a sudden growth spurt (suddenly getting taller).



No two girls are exactly the same. Puberty changes can start happening from the age of about 9 years. Some girls start even earlier, and others when they are older.

If you have a disability, exactly the same processes will happen to your body at puberty.

If you are intersex, your body changes may not happen as expected. If your body is very different to what is discussed here, speak to your healthcare professional.

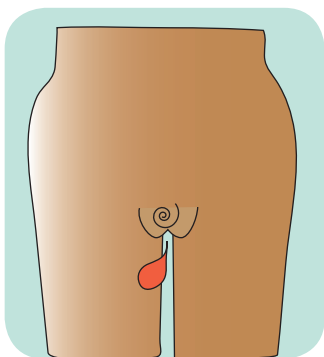


Breasts get bigger. This is because the level of hormones goes up and that changes the tissue and fat in the breasts. They may be tender or sore

Nipples and surrounding skin get darker in colour



Hips get broader – waist seems smaller

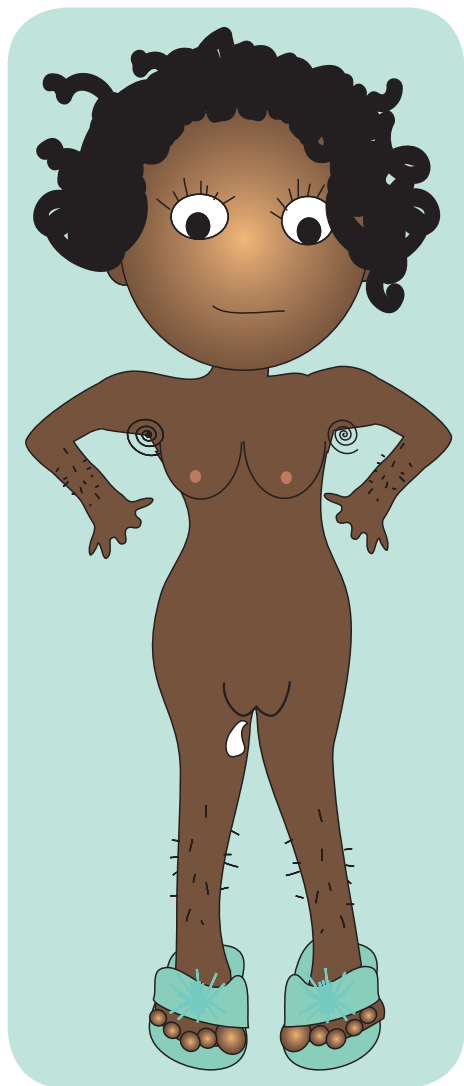


Hair grows in the armpits and pubic area. Hair on arms, legs and face can become thicker and darker. Periods start (menstruation).

**See page 48**



## Puberty – more typical changes for girls



Girls may experience increased vaginal discharge during puberty. This is completely normal.

### What is vaginal discharge?

Vaginas are self-cleaning.

Small amounts of fluid are made inside the vagina and cervix, carrying out old cells that have lined the vagina. This is the body's way of keeping the vagina healthy.

The discharge is clear or milky and does not smell bad.

The discharge is thicker:

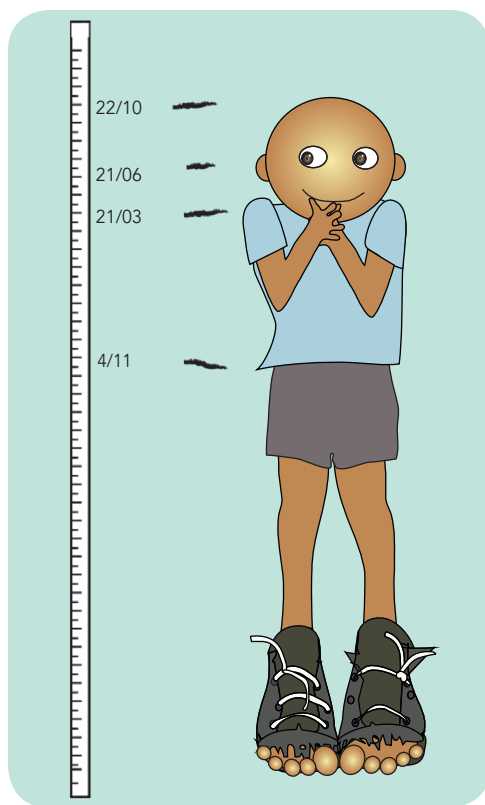
- At the time of the month when the egg comes out of the ovaries
- During breastfeeding
- When sexually excited

Do not douche (wash out the vagina) or insert anything into it. See a nurse or doctor if the discharge smells bad.

People with disabilities might need extra help understanding and managing the changes in their bodies.

## PUBERTY – TYPICAL CHANGES FOR BOYS

The first sign of puberty is often a growth spurt (suddenly getting taller).

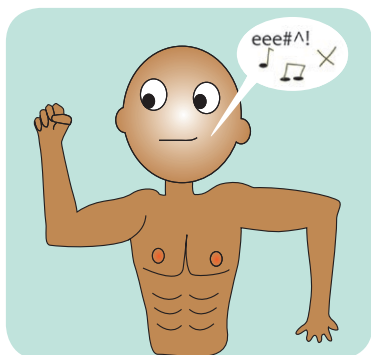


No two boys are exactly the same. Puberty changes can start happening between nine-and-a-half and about 10-and-a-half years of age. Some boys start even earlier, and others when they are older.

If you have a disability, exactly the same processes will happen to your body at puberty.

If you are intersex, your body changes may not happen as expected. If your body is very different to what is discussed here, speak to your healthcare professional.

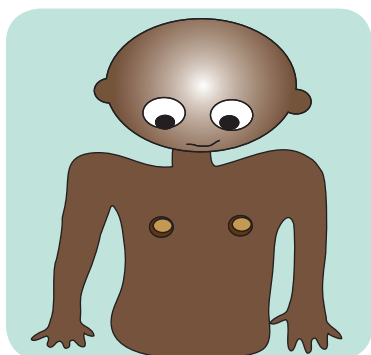
## Puberty – typical changes for boys



The voice changes, sometimes 'cracks' (that means it suddenly becomes lower or higher while talking) and becomes deeper

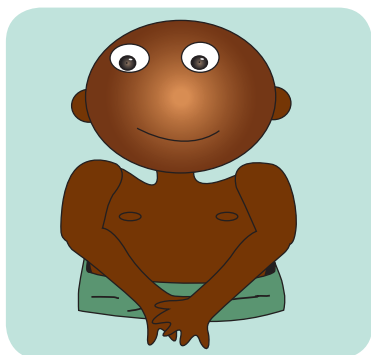
Muscles get thicker

Shoulders get wider

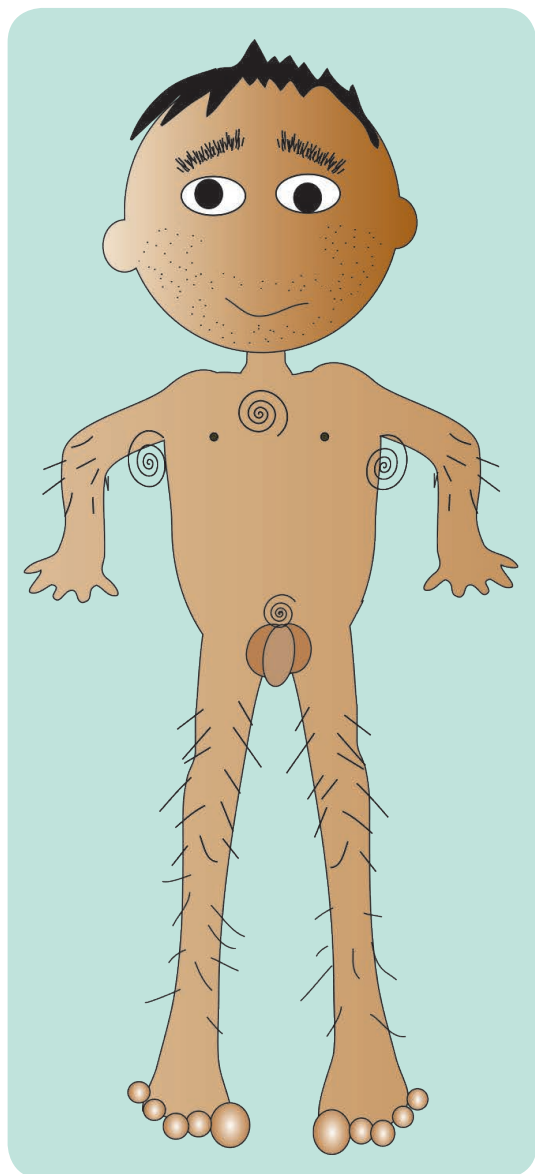


Nipples get bigger and darker

They may be tender or sore



Testicles start producing sperm



Hairs grows on the face, as well as on the legs and arms

Hair grows on the chest, as well as under arms and between the legs

People with disabilities might need extra help understanding and managing changes in their bodies

## TYPICAL DIRECTION BOYS

**10½-17½ years**

Growth of scrotum and testes

**10½-18½ years**

Change in voice

**11-18½ years**

Lengthening of the penis

**11-14 years**

Growth of pubic hair

I had a growth spurt – I grew 2cms in 2 months!



## MILESTONES IN

Milestones are important points on a journey.

**12-17 years**

Growth spurt – PEAK

**12-17 years**

Change in body shape

**13-18½ years**

Growth of facial and underarm hair

# SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

## TYPICAL DIRECTION GIRLS

We start the journey through puberty at different times.



I only got  
my first  
period at 15



My breasts only  
started growing  
when I was 17

**8½-13 years**  
Breast budding

**8½-14 years**  
Growth of pubic hair

**9½-14½ years**  
Growth spurt – PEAK

**9½-16 years**  
First period (menarche)

**10½-17 years**  
Growth of underarm hair

**12-16½ years**  
Change in body shape

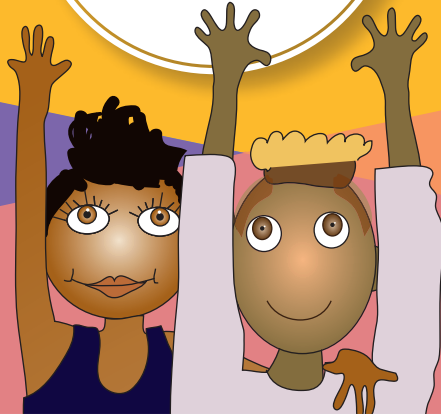
**12½-16½ years**  
Adult breast size

**This is a rough guide. Everyone's journey is different.**





2



**OUR CHANGING BODIES**

## OUR CHANGING BODIES

We all go through puberty at different times. We are all different. Just look at our cast of characters.



As we grow and go through physical and emotional changes, the important thing to remember is to embrace the body that each of us has and to feel good about it. No matter what our size or shape, all of us always deserve love and respect, especially from ourselves.

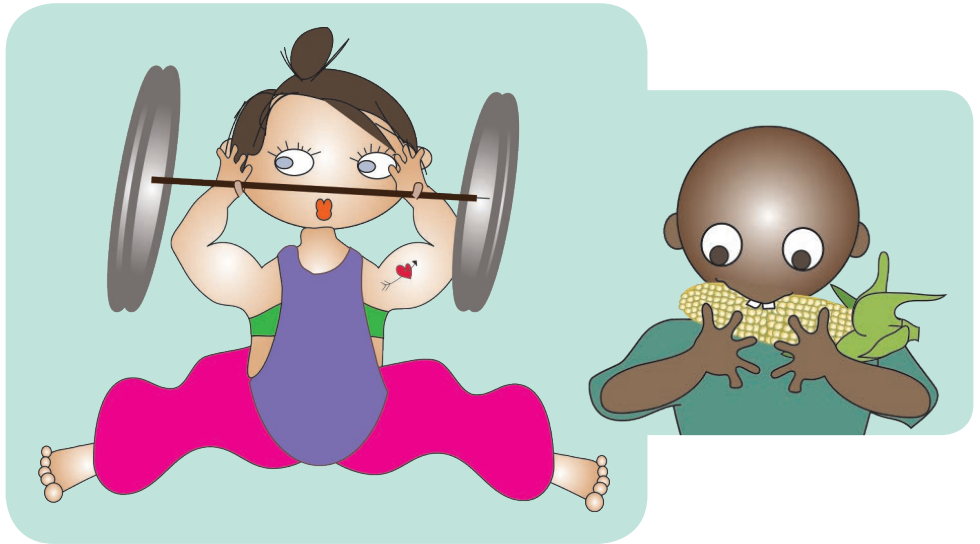
### Ask yourself:

- What does my body do for me?
- What do I love about my body?
- What is unique about me?
- What I can do to help my body stay strong and healthy?

## DIFFERENT BODY TYPES

There are three basic human body types and most of us do not completely fit into one category. Many of us are a combination of two body types. Some of us are tall, some are short, some are thinner, some are fatter. Some of us have lots of hair, some have less. There are many different shapes and sizes and they are all normal:

- Narrow and wider waists
- Wider or narrow shoulders
- Big or small feet and hands
- Shorter or longer legs
- More or less muscular
- Bigger or smaller bone structure



Exercise and eating fresh vegetables help keep us healthy.

## The three most common basic body types

- **A** (Endomorph) Rounder with soft curves, more body fat
- **B** (Ectomorph) Slimmer and less curvy
- ▼ **C** (Mesomorph) Wider shoulders, slim hips, more muscular

Our basic body type cannot be changed. Shape can be changed a little by different eating or exercise.



If you are Type A, you will never look like a Type B or C. Lots of exercise and the healthiest food you can eat is the best way to maintain a healthy weight. Always take your body type into account when you are thinking about whether you might be too fat or too thin.



A



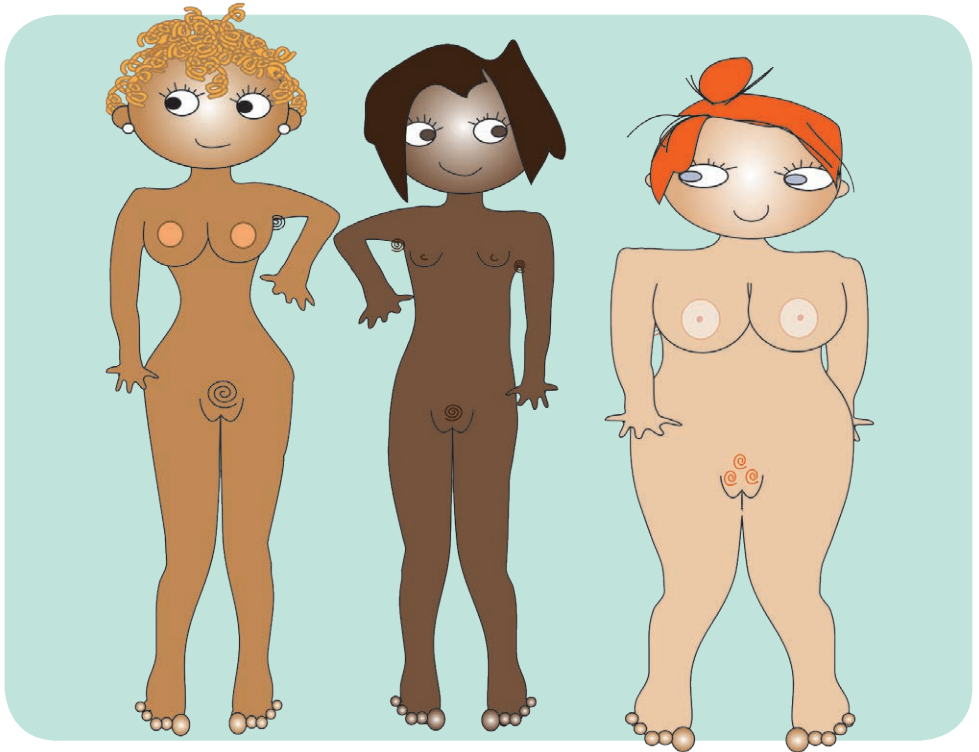
B



C



## BODY TYPES – GIRLS



Some girls have big breasts while others have medium-sized or small ones.

### Girls may also have:

- Big or small hips and bottoms
- Narrow or wider waists
- Wide or narrow shoulders
- Big or small feet and hands
- Shorter or longer legs
- Big or small thighs
- More or less muscles
- Bigger or smaller bones



Vulvas – the outside parts of female genitals – are all different too. There are many shapes and sizes: the clitoris might be bigger or smaller and the labia shorter or longer (see page 41).

## Deciding what happens to your body

In some cultural groups girls are taught to stretch their labia (folds of skin of the vulva). This is not harmful but no one should be forced to do it.

Some cultures examine girls' genitals to try to see if they have had sex (a practice called 'virginity testing'). No one is allowed to do anything to your body without your agreement. This is called the right to bodily integrity.

In several African countries, cutting of girls' genitals is practised as part of cultural and ethnic identity. Removing any part of the female genitals (sex organs) for non-medical reasons is female genital mutilation (FGM).

FGM can cause death or permanent health problems as well as severe pain and distress. FGM is a violation of girls' and women's human rights. Most countries have made it illegal but it still happens to millions of girls. It is important to make sure girls who have gone through FGM get proper healthcare and are not teased or treated badly because their bodies look different to other girls.

## Some information about breasts

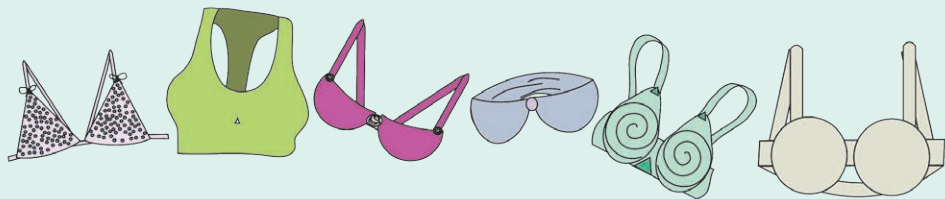
Breasts come in all different shapes and sizes. A mom's breast size does not mean her daughter's breast size will be the same.

### Busting some myths

- Sexiness has nothing to do with breast size
- Sleeping face down will not affect breast size
- Wearing a bra will not affect the shape or size of breasts

### Some facts

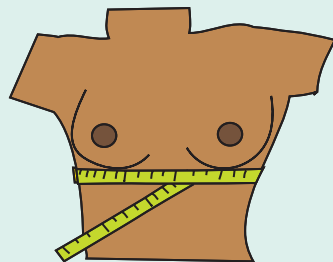
- It is important to find a bra that is comfortable and fits properly
- A bra should give the support you need (e.g. sports bra)
- Boys' breasts also swell during puberty and can sometimes become quite tender and painful



## Finding the correct bra size

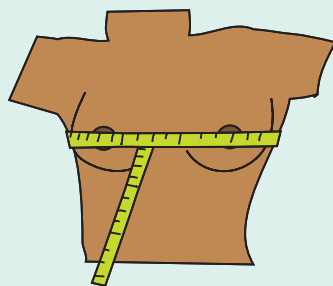
### To work out your bra size (in inches):

- First measure around your chest just below breasts. Add six to that number
- If the number is even (e.g. 30, 32, 34, 46, 38, 40, etc.) then that is your bra size
- If the number is uneven (e.g. 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, etc.) subtract 1 inch to get your bra size



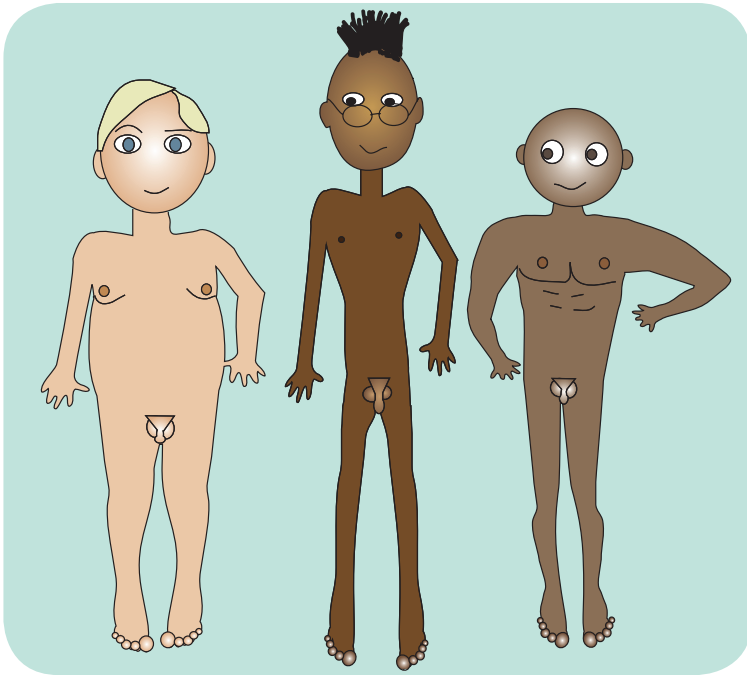
### How to work out cup size:

- Measure around the fullest part of your breasts, across the nipples
- If the number is less than the bra size, your cup size is AAA
- If the number is the same as the bra size, your cup size is AA
- 1 inch more, your cup size is A
- 2 inches more, your cup size is B
- 3 inches more, your cup size is C
- 4 inches more, your cup size is D



1 inch = 2.54cm

## BODY TYPES – BOYS



Some boys are tall, some are short, some are thinner, some are fatter. Some have lots of hair, others have less. There are many different shapes and sizes:

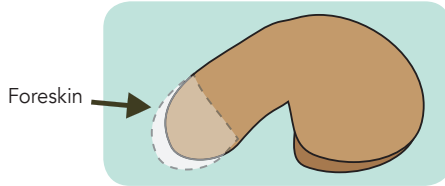
- Narrow or wider waists
- Thicker or thinner necks
- Stringy or broad muscles
- Wider or narrow shoulders
- Big or small feet and hands
- Shorter or longer legs
- Bigger or smaller boned

Penises are all different too. There are many shapes and sizes: long, short, fat or thin. Penises get bigger when they are erect (see page 43). Being afraid, cold or nervous reduces the blood inside the penis, making it look smaller. Some are circumcised, others are not.



# CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision is a procedure in which the foreskin, the skin covering the tip of the penis, is removed.

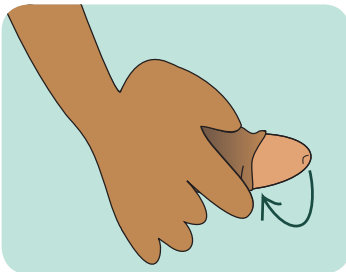


In some cultures, a baby boy is circumcised when he is a few days old.

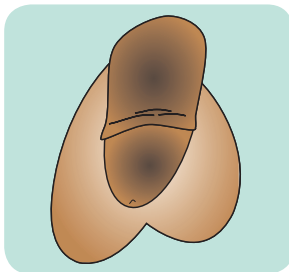
In other cultures, circumcision is practised as an important part of passing from adolescence into manhood.

Some boys and men get circumcised for health reasons. Medical male circumcision can reduce the risk of males getting infected with HIV during sex.

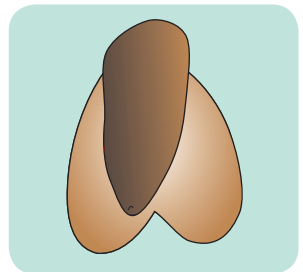
Whether circumcised or not, you should wash your genitals every day. If uncircumcised, your foreskin should be pulled back as far as it will comfortably go when you wash.



Pulling back the foreskin



Circumcised



Uncircumcised

**Circumcision should only be performed voluntarily – with your consent.**

You have the right to 'bodily integrity'. This means that no one can do anything to your body without your permission.



3



REPRODUCTION

## REPRODUCTIVE (SEX) ORGANS

Reproduction is how animals and plants make more of themselves. In the case of mammals, including humans, offspring are produced by a male sperm fertilising an egg from the female.

Sex organs are also called reproductive organs because they are the parts of the body that make us able to reproduce (have babies).

This section looks at how reproduction happens.

Human beings are typically either male or female, depending on what type of sex organs they have. The differences are not always visible.

Some people are intersex, which means they have sex organs that are not typically male or female.

People use many different names to refer to sex organs. It is helpful to know and use the correct names so that we can understand and explain changes in our bodies.

This book talks about girls and women having vulvas and vaginas, which are the 'female' reproductive organs. It talks about boys and men having penises and testicles, which are the 'male' reproductive organs. We have described body parts as simply as possible, using language that is familiar to people from different language and cultural backgrounds. Not everyone uses girl and boy labels in this way. We all have the right to choose any labels we use for our own body.

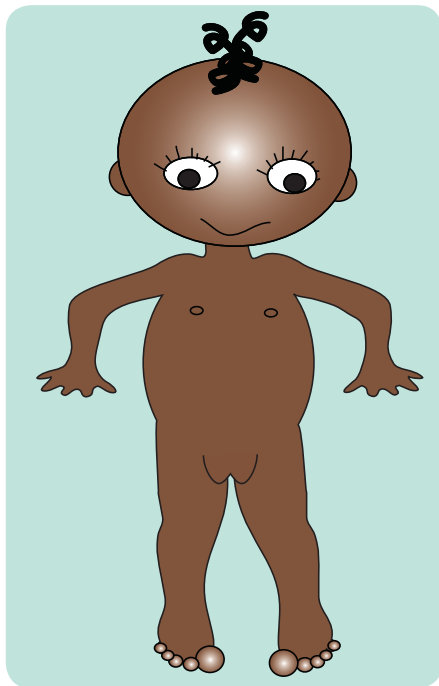
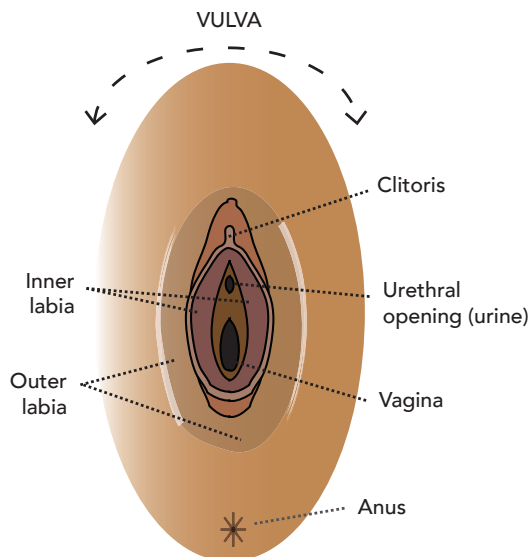
Not all people can have children, and some people choose not to.

# FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE (SEX) ORGANS

## Outside the body

Females have reproductive or sex organs on the inside and the outside of their bodies.

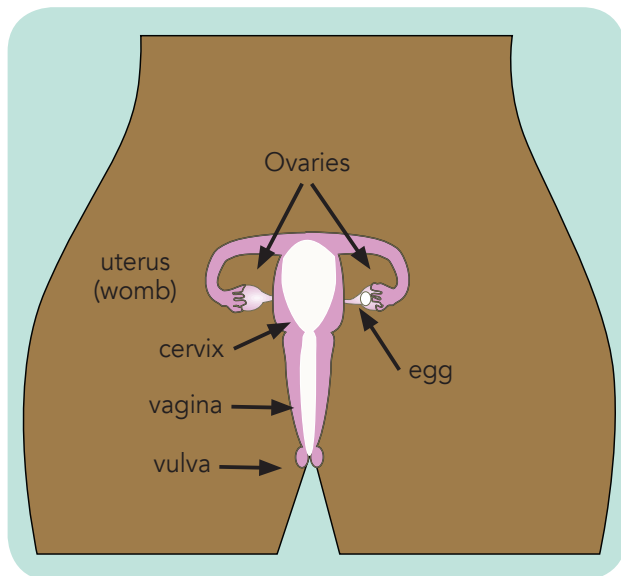
The proper name for the outside part is the vulva. Lots of people mistakenly call it the vagina.



The clitoris forms from the same type of tissues as the penis. The differences are due to hormones.

# FEMALE SEX ORGANS

## Inside the body

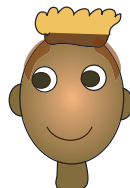


The cervix connects the vagina with the womb.



At the entrance to the vagina, there is a thin bit of skin called the hymen. It serves no practical purpose and can stretch open.

The hymen has nothing to do with virginity. 'Losing your virginity' means having consensual sex (sex you agree to) for the first time.'



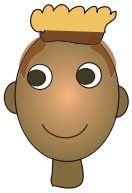
Girls have thousands of eggs inside their ovaries. At puberty, these eggs start to mature and come out one at a time, every month (at first, this is not regular).

# MALE REPRODUCTIVE (SEX) ORGANS

## Outside the body

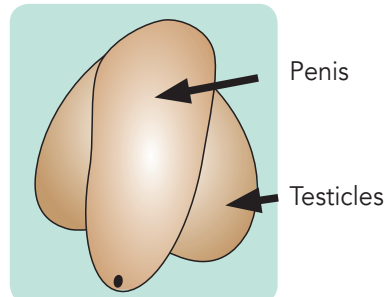
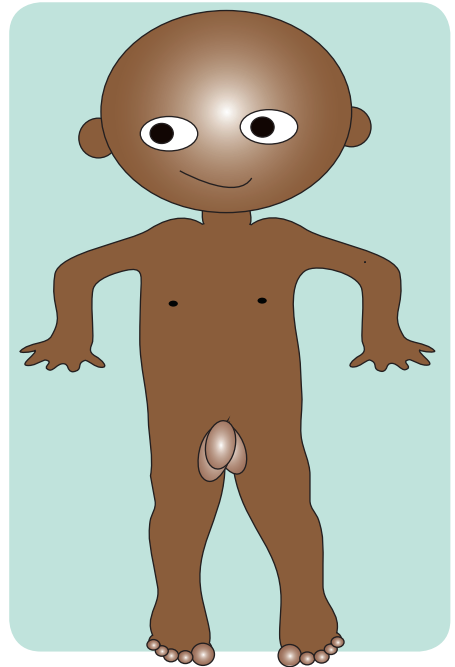
Male sex organs are the parts of the body that make males able to reproduce (make babies).

The proper names for the male sex organs are penis and testicles.



Sometimes the penis gets stiff. This is called an erection. It happens because the blood supply increases.

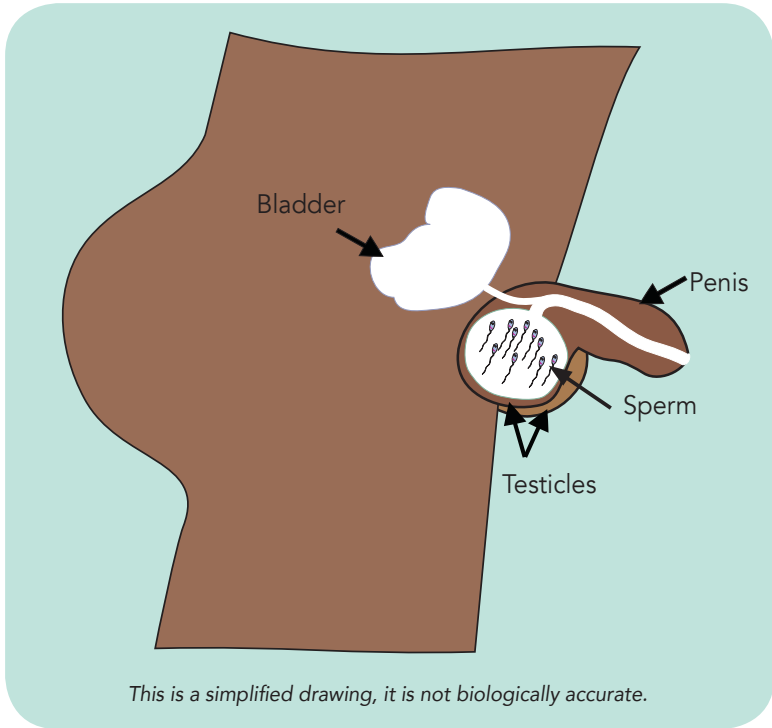
Men and boys and even babies have erections. Erections can happen while a person is asleep, when the penis is touched, or when the person is excited. During puberty, erections can happen unexpectedly.



The testicles produce millions of sperm (typically about 10-30 billion sperm every month). The body absorbs sperm that does not come out.

## MALE SEX ORGANS

### Inside the male sex organs

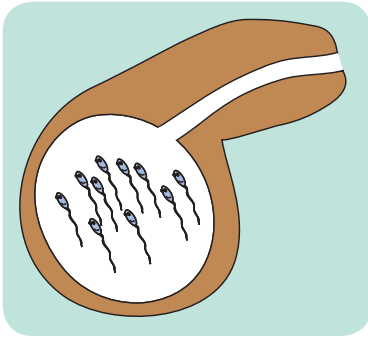
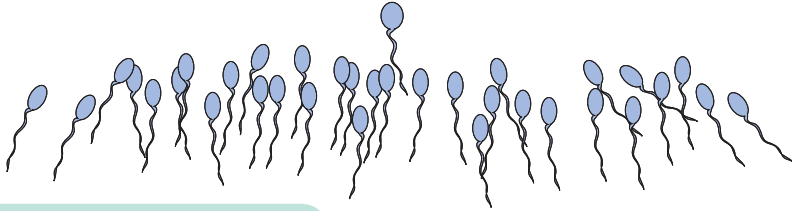


During puberty, the testicles start producing sperm.

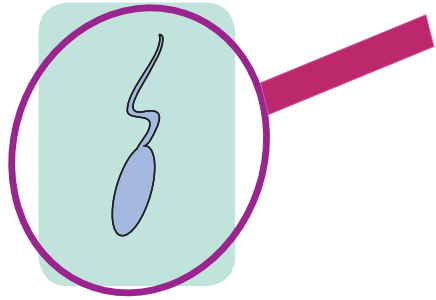


# SPERM

## Inside the testicles



Sperm developing  
in the testicles



Sperm

## What is sperm?

Sperm are the male seeds (or reproductive cells). During puberty, the testicles start producing sperm for the first time. Sperm look a bit like tadpoles and are very tiny. You need a microscope to see them.

When a sperm joins with a female's egg, the cells divide and an embryo starts to develop. This can happen when the erect penis is inside the vagina and the semen (the liquid containing the sperm), shoots out very fast (ejaculation). Semen can also cause pregnancy if it is transferred from fingers or a condom into the vagina.

It only takes one sperm to fertilise an egg. Each sperm has the boy's information inside it. Each egg has the girl's information inside it. A baby has both parents' sets of information.



4



**MENSTRUATION**

## WHAT IS MENSTRUATION?

Menstruation, or having a period, is when a small amount of bloody fluid from the uterus (womb) is released through the vagina. Menstruation happens because of hormones. Most people who have uteruses, vaginas, fallopian tubes, and ovaries get their periods. Intersex people might or might not menstruate. Not everybody who gets a period identifies as a girl or woman. Not everyone who identifies as a girl or woman has periods.

Every month, the lining of the uterus thickens to prepare to receive a fertilised egg. If the egg is fertilised by a sperm from a male, pregnancy occurs. When the egg is not fertilised, a menstrual period occurs.

There are thousands of eggs inside the ovaries. At puberty, these eggs start to mature and begin to come out of the ovaries into the fallopian tubes one at time, every month (at first, this is not regular).

## WHEN DO PERIODS START?

Periods usually start from nine years, but can start earlier or later. Periods last between three and six days but can be longer or shorter. Menstrual cycles are not always regular. Stress and illness, and not getting enough to eat, can affect periods.

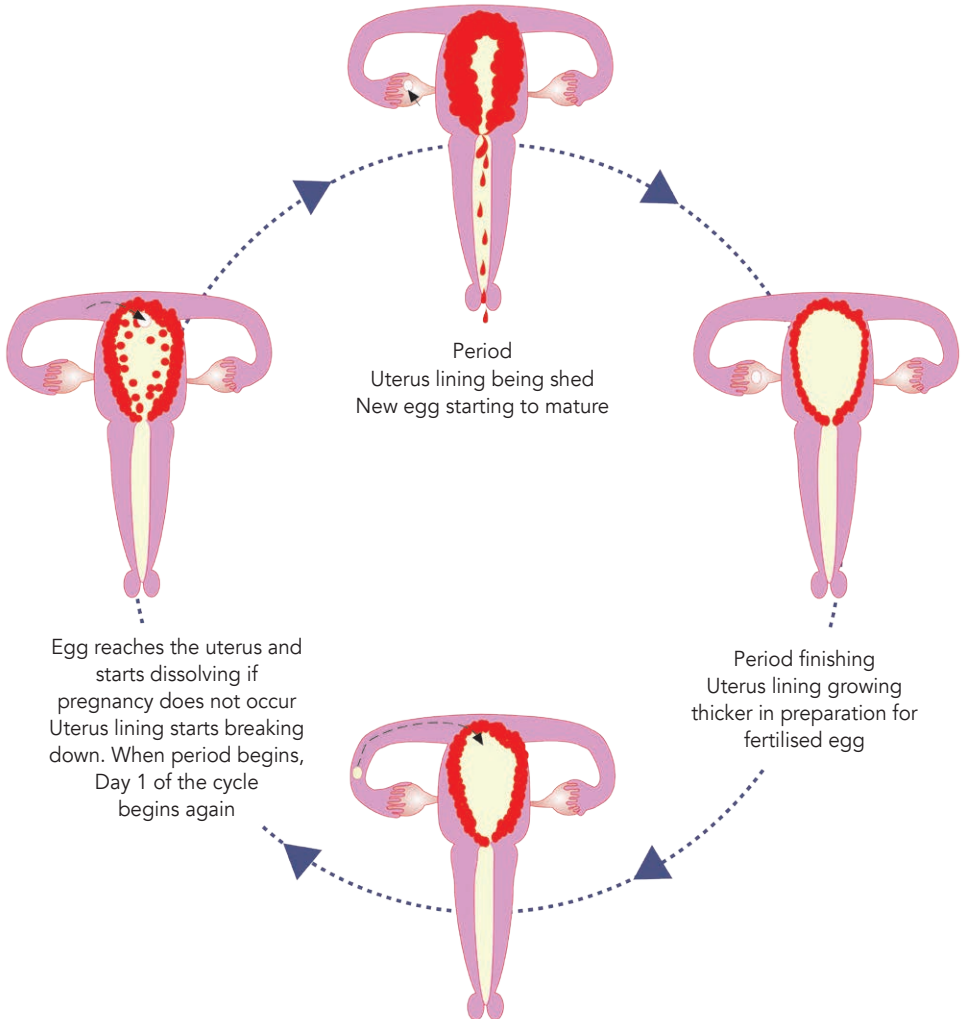
Most girls have periods but there are medical conditions that prevent menstruation. Certain disabilities affect menstruation but generally, girls with disabilities do have periods.



When the egg comes out of the ovary to move to the uterus, it is called ovulation.

# THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

A cycle



Egg reaches the uterus and starts dissolving if pregnancy does not occur  
Uterus lining starts breaking down. When period begins, Day 1 of the cycle begins again

Period  
Uterus lining being shed  
New egg starting to mature

Period finishing  
Uterus lining growing thicker in preparation for fertilised egg

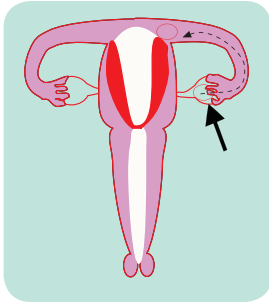
Egg is travelling along the fallopian tube towards the uterus  
Lining of uterus thickening  
Pregnancy likely if semen gets into the vagina

## FERTILISING THE EGG



Every month, one of the eggs travels towards the fallopian tube.

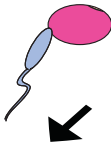
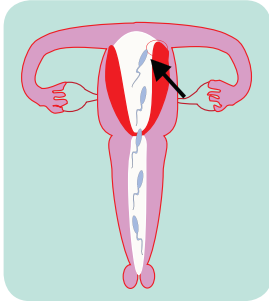
If people have sexual intercourse and the sperm reaches the egg while it is in the fallopian tube, then the egg is likely to be fertilised and the girl becomes pregnant (if not, a menstrual period occurs).



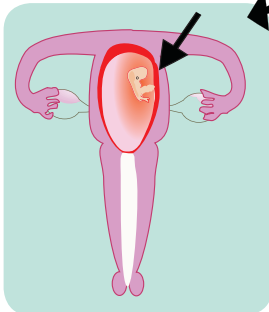
Egg travels towards the uterus every month



Unprotected sexual intercourse can result in sperm entering the vagina and reaching the egg in the fallopian tube



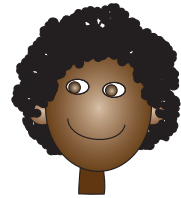
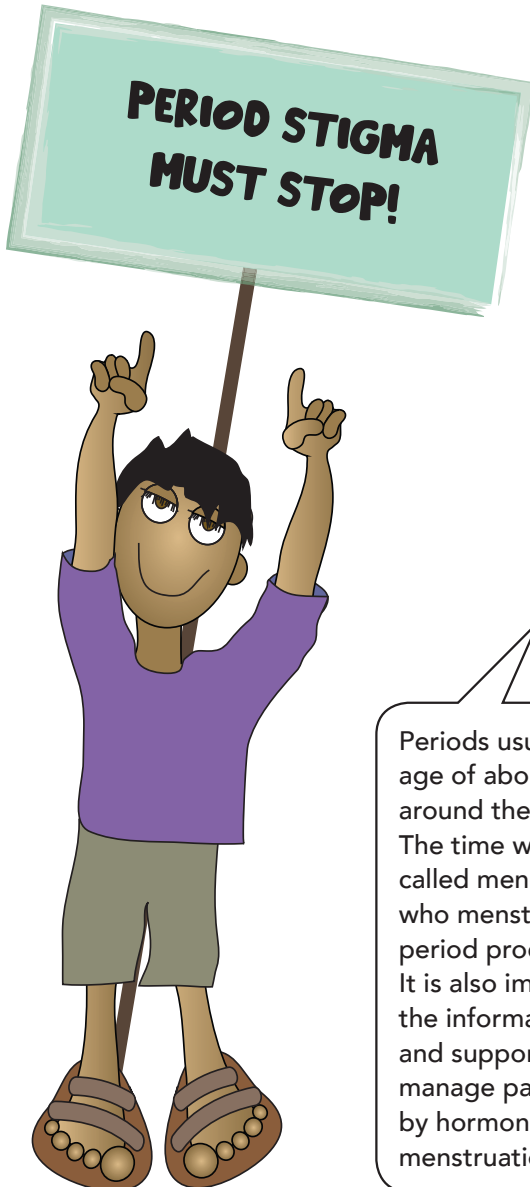
If the sperm has reached the egg at this point, the sperm and egg join together



Fertilised egg = pregnancy. The egg attaches itself to the lining of the uterus

Cells start to divide to form an embryo

## MENSTRUATION



Periods usually start from the age of about nine years and stop around the age of 45-55 years. The time when periods end is called menopause. Everyone who menstruates has the right to period products that suit them. It is also important they have all the information, health services and support they need to manage pain or distress caused by hormonal changes due to menstruation.

# ALL ABOUT MENSTRUAL HEALTH



During menstruation, girls need to use something to soak up the blood. This also prevents their clothes from being stained.

How much bleeding is 'normal' during a period?



The most common amount of blood, or menstrual flow in a whole period is about two tablespoons (30 ml). Each individual is different. Some people's menstrual flow is just a couple of drops daily; for a few it might be two tablespoons or more on some days. Factors such as age, height and weight and whether a person has had children, can affect their period.

## Girls can use lots of methods to soak up the blood



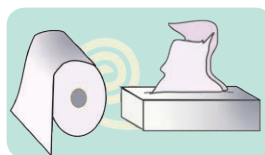
Any clean material that easily soaks up liquid like old cut up t-shirts can be used. Fold the material well into a pad-like shape and place inside the panties between the legs. These should be changed often and washed with soap and cold water, then dried. If possible, they should be ironed to kill germs.





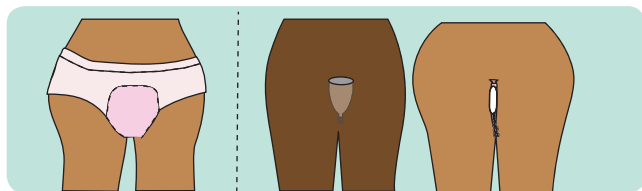
Sanitary towels/pads are special pads usually made out of cotton wool and can be bought at some shops. Some pads are disposable and others are washable. They are placed inside the panties between the legs. Some have a sticky side to hold the pad in place. Some have 'wings' that help prevent leaks. A medium pad holds a teaspoon (5ml) of menstrual fluid.

Tampons are tubes of cotton wool that are inserted into the vagina to catch the blood. They should be used one at a time, and changed often to prevent infection. It is important to make sure that the last tampon is removed at the end of the period.



Toilet paper, cotton wool or tissues can be folded into pads and placed inside the panties between the legs. Make sure that bits are not left in the vagina as this can cause infection.

Menstrual cups are usually made of latex-free silicone. The cup is inserted into the vaginal opening (instructions are provided). They can be worn for up to 12 hours at a time, are easy to clean and easy to sterilise and can last for years if looked after correctly.



Pads are worn inside the panties.

Tampons and menstrual cups are worn inside the vagina.



Can I use one pad or tampon overnight?

Depending on your flow, a pad will usually last through your night's sleep without leaking. It is better to use a pad than a tampon overnight. This reduces the risk of bacteria build-up that can lead to infection.

How often should I change my pad or tampon?



It is important to change the pad or tampon regularly to prevent leakage and growth of bacteria. It will depend on the person's menstrual flow and where they are (at school, work or travelling) when they can change. It is advisable to change the pad or tampon every 4-6 hours.



It is important to wash often. Menstrual blood is not dirty but it can become smelly after it comes into contact with air.

Sometimes girls are afraid that other people can see the pads or cotton rags. Asking a friend or looking in the mirror to check if it shows is all that is needed. A pad feels much bigger than it looks.



How long does a period last?

Menstrual bleeding usually lasts 4-6 days – but it can be shorter or longer. Bleeding may not occur at regular intervals, or at the same rate throughout the day or night, or from one day to the next.

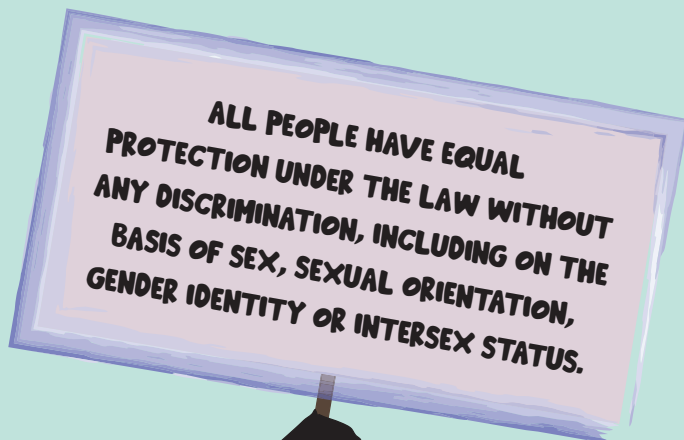


Wrap sanitary towels/pads/tampons in paper or plastic and dispose of carefully. Do not flush down the toilet.





**ABOUT SEXUALITY AND GENDER**



## Being respectful of our differences

Remember, there are lots of people who don't want to be labelled. Identity is a personal decision.

Some people may feel that none of the common labels feel right to them. Sexual orientation and identity can remain the same throughout life, or can change depending on attraction, partner or who the person is sexually active with. This is completely normal. A label can change as you change, it does not mean you are confused.

## SEXUALITY AND GENDER

There are many ways that humans are different. Each person is unique (one of a kind) and very special. Some of us are shy and some find it easy to make friends. We have different ways of showing our feelings and we enjoy different activities.



We feel attraction and affection towards different people and express this in different ways. The following pages give more information about these differences and what it means to have love, friendship and respect for people who differ from us.

## 1. Sexual activities



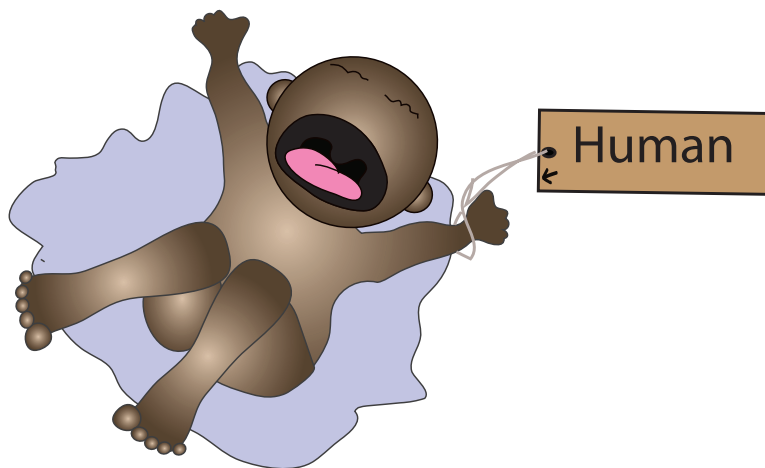
Sex means different things. It means your assigned sex (boy or girl label). It also means sexual acts or behaviour.

Sexual behaviour in adolescence usually starts with hugging and holding hands, leading to kissing and touching, followed by other types of intimate behaviour. The usual definition of sexual intercourse is when the penis is put into the vagina. There are many kinds of sexual activity and they have different risks for pregnancy and infections such as HIV.

Sexual pleasure can come from thoughts, talking and touching. It happens when our feelings and our bodies are aroused. When the pleasure gets intense, it can lead to an orgasm. For boys, the orgasm is followed by ejaculation.

# IS SEX?

## 2. Your sex label



Sex also means biological (assigned) sex. Your sex is like a label. It is what goes on your birth certificate after you are born, saying that you are male or female. This is usually based upon what your genitals look like. So, a person's sex can be female, male or intersex. We are not simply males or females.



If you are born with obviously female genitals (vulva/vagina) you will be classified as female.



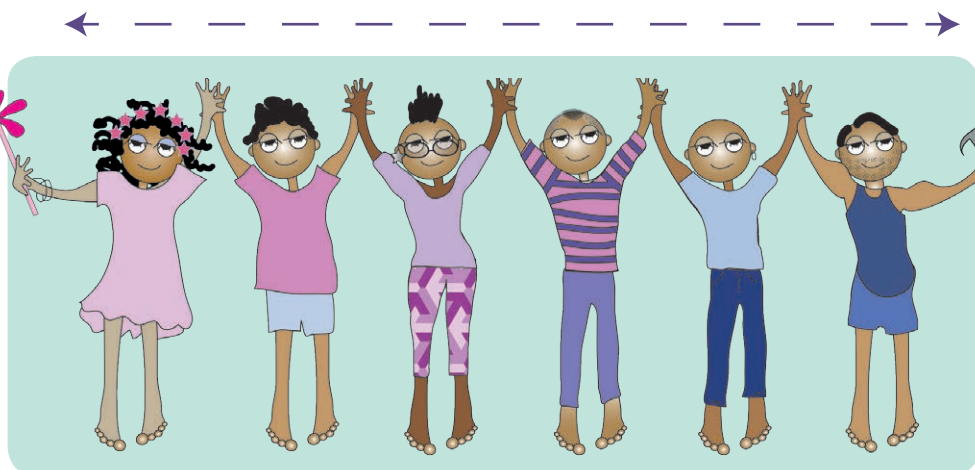
If you are born with clearly male genitals (penis and testes) you will be classified as male.



Some babies are born with genitals that are not typical so they may be classified as intersex, but they will still be given a boy label or a girl label.\*

\*Intersex features may only become noticeable around the time of puberty.

## MORE ABOUT INTERSEX



When a baby is born, it is usually obvious that it is a girl, or a boy. Sometimes it is not clear because the baby's body does not look typically male or typically female. Then we say the baby is intersex. Our sex is not just about genitals or what our bodies look like. It is also about what is inside. We have talked about how genes and hormones affect everything that happens in our bodies. This includes how our internal reproductive organs develop. The different variations are not visible. Some people may never find out that they have intersex variations.

An intersex person may identify as male or female or nonbinary, just like someone who is born male or female.

We see that nature does not decide where 'male' ends and intersex begins, and where intersex ends and becomes female. It's humans who decide.



**Note** – this is a very simplified version of a very complex subject. See 'Tell me about LGBTQI+'.



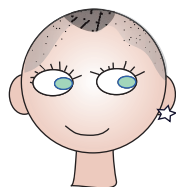


When we go through puberty, some of the ways we are growing and changing are obvious and some are not. Some of our differences are easy to notice and some are not.

Some of us adapt to the changes more easily but we don't always know how others are coping, so let's always be kind and ready to listen or help.

## WHAT IS

It's easy to confuse sex and gender. Sex is about bodies and gender is about identity



### Gender roles

Gender roles are how we are expected to act, speak, dress and behave based upon our assigned sex. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in a 'feminine' way, to be polite, obedient and nurturing. Boys and men are generally expected to be strong and to be in charge.

Different societies tend to have fixed ideas about what girls and boys should and shouldn't do even though they might have the same abilities, interests and feelings. Gender roles may change over time.



Gender identity is how people feel about being male or female. Some people feel neither male nor female. Some people feel like a boyish girl, or a girlish boy. They may choose to be known as 'genderqueer', 'gendervariant', or nonbinary or other words too. The language is changing all the time.

### Gender expression

Gender expression is the way we show our gender. We often do this by the way we dress and behave.

# GENDER?

## Gender identity

Gender identity is how you feel inside. It's a feeling that begins very early in life. Your feelings about your gender identity begin as early as age two or three. Gender identity isn't about who you're attracted to, but about who you ARE.

### Transgender

If you are born with body parts that don't match with how you feel about yourself, you may be transgender. For example, if you are born with a boy's body but in your heart you feel you are a girl then you may be a transgender girl. You might want to dress differently and change your given name. Some people take medication (hormones) and may have surgery to change their body so that it matches their gender identity.

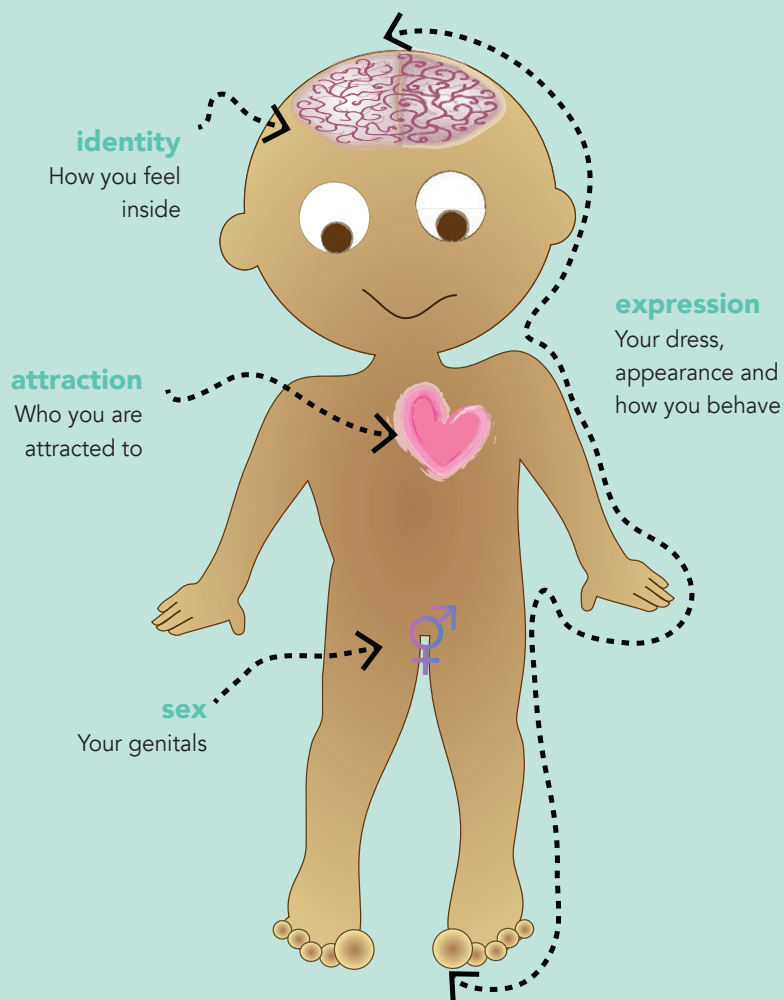
### Cisgender

If you feel comfortable that your body parts match your identity, the boy or girl label you were given when you were born (your assigned sex) you are a cisgender person.



Gender is about the way that people behave, think and look as females or males. Different cultures, religions and communities have different 'rules'.

We can use this picture to help us understand some of these words better



adapted from the Genderbread Person  
Genderbread Person v3.3 | The Genderbread Person  
<https://www.genderbread.org/resource/genderbread-person-v3-3>

## ATTRACTION

We have talked about:

- Sex – sexual activities and being female, male or intersex.
- Gender identity – how you feel inside
- Gender roles – how society expects you to look and behave

**ATTRACTION** is another thing that lets us see how we are all different.



People are attracted to each other in many different ways and for different reasons.

Sexual orientation is about who we're attracted to and might want to have a romantic, physical (of the body) and emotional (of the heart) relationship with. Sexual orientation is about feelings.

## Types of sexual orientation

- Being attracted to someone who is a different gender – (girls who are attracted to boys, or boys who are attracted to girls) is often called being 'straight' or 'heterosexual'.
- Being attracted to people of the same gender is often called being 'gay' or 'homosexual'.
- Gay girls may prefer the term 'lesbian'.
- Being attracted to both boys and girls is often called being 'bisexual'.
- Being attracted to people across many different gender identities (male, female, transgender, genderqueer, etc.) may be called 'pansexual' or 'queer'.
- If someone is unsure about their sexual orientation, they may call themselves 'questioning' or 'curious'.
- If a person doesn't experience any sexual attraction to anyone, they may call themselves 'asexual'.

Transgender or intersex people's sexual orientation may be any of the above.

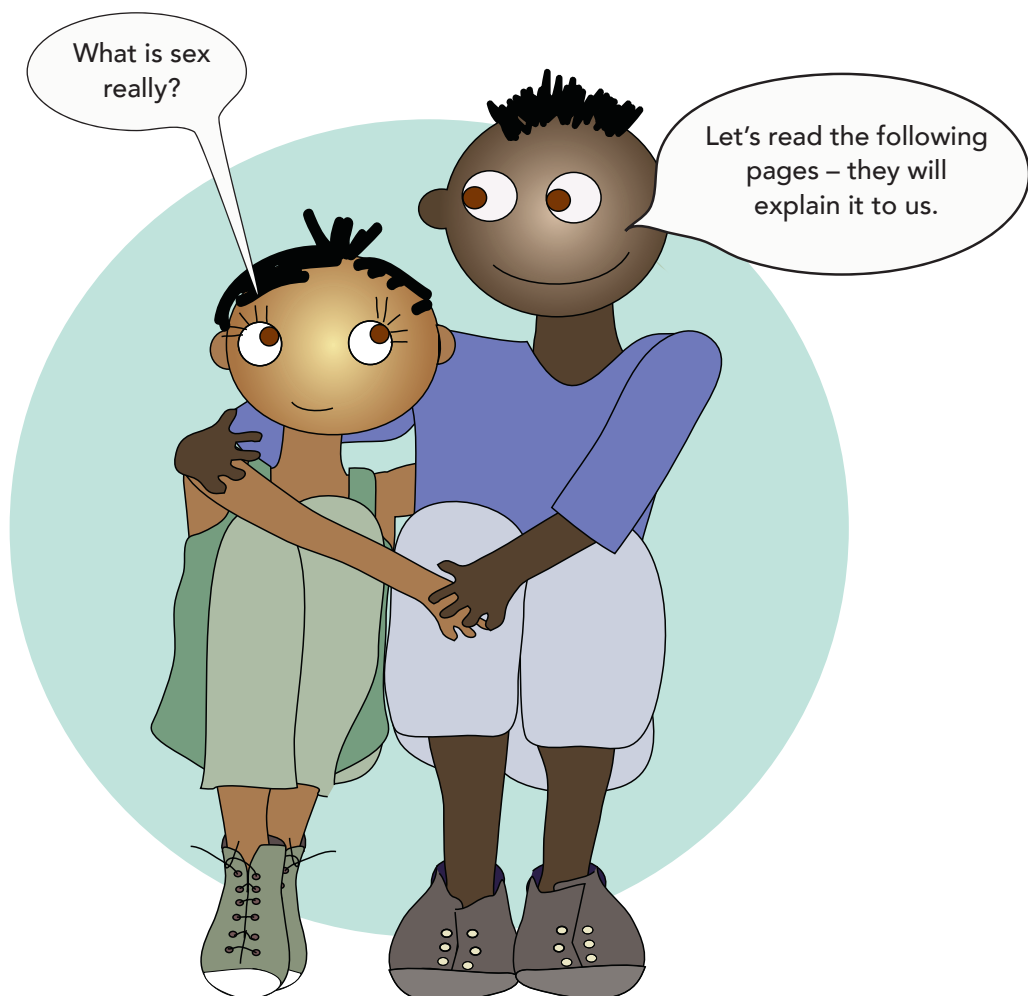
6



**SEXUAL FEELINGS AND PLEASURE**



## FEELINGS AND RELATIONSHIPS

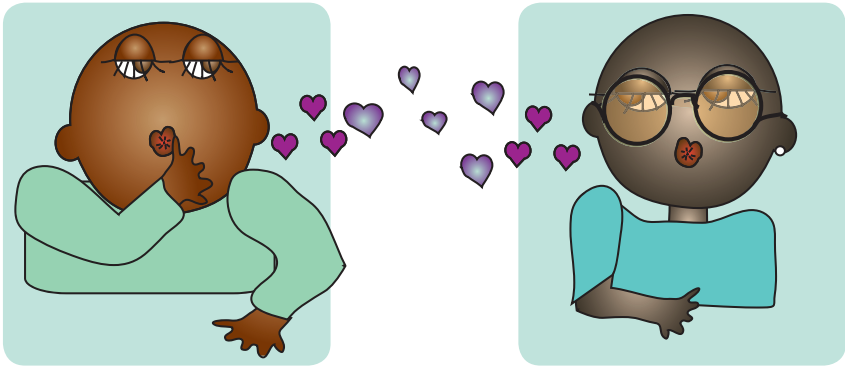




## HORMONAL CHANGES

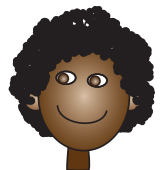
Apart from the changes in our appearance and the physical changes in our bodies, we experience changes in the way we feel during puberty.

Changes in our hormones affect the way we think and feel. Everyone experiences this differently and at different times but it is common to have very strong feelings. We may feel suddenly happy or sad, excited or angry, shy, fearful or brave. We may also have strong sexual urges and feel suddenly and intensely attracted to others.



This is a normal part of growing up. It can be very exciting and pleasurable, and also confusing and upsetting. Many of us start wanting to express our feelings towards others and have intimate relationships. An intimate relationship is when two people take the time to truly get to know and care about each other. It is important only to do this when we are ready and without taking risks.

Understanding how our hormones affect us allows us to enjoy these new feelings in safe and healthy ways.



## SEX AND FEELINGS

‘Feelings’ means different things. It can mean:

- Physical sensations
- Emotional states
- Romantic attraction

The new feelings and urges that will start during puberty are a natural part of growing up:

- Sexual feelings, or feelings of wanting to have sex, can be very strong
- Sexual feelings are normal but that does not mean that you are ready to have sex
- Your body may be ready, but your heart and mind might not be. Sexual feelings can overcome your common sense, and may lead to unsafe behaviour



## ABOUT SEX

There are many different ways of having sex. Sex is one of the ways in which people can show love for each other. Sex can be enjoyable, and safer, in a loving and consensual relationship where both partners know their rights and their responsibilities.

It is important not to be pushed or to push anyone into a sexual relationship. It can help to have a friend or adult we really trust to support and advise us. As we grow older and have more knowledge and experience, we may be able to recognise unequal sexual relationships due to gender, age, economic status or differences in power.



Different cultures, religions and generations have different ways of talking about sex. There are lots of confusing messages about sex and sexuality. It is always important to check what people tell us, whether it is friends, family, teachers and other adults, social media, magazines, radio and TV.

## DEALING WITH SEXUAL FEELINGS SAFELY, RESPECTFULLY AND HEALTHILY

Sexual feelings, or feelings of wanting to have sex (arousal), are biological reactions of our bodies. They are normal and they feel very nice.

Learning to manage these feelings is a bit easier if you understand what happens in your body when you are attracted to someone.

When boys become sexually excited, they might have an erection, which means their penises get bigger and stiffer.

It is important to remember that erections don't only happen because someone is feeling sexy. They can happen unexpectedly, even during sleep.

Girls get sexually aroused in a similar way but it doesn't show because their sex organs are inside. Their vagina becomes wet (from the fluids passing through the vaginal walls).

Sexual feelings are personal. We can't control when they happen but we can control whether we share them or show them. Even when you have a romantic or sexual relationship, it's important to agree about sharing and showing feelings. We need to ask before kissing or hugging someone. That's called consent.

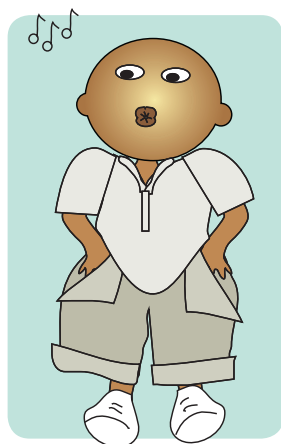
A safe alternative to having sex before you are ready is masturbation.

It is natural for humans to enjoy their bodies. Sexual feelings and desires happen throughout life. Some people choose to act on these feelings and others do not.

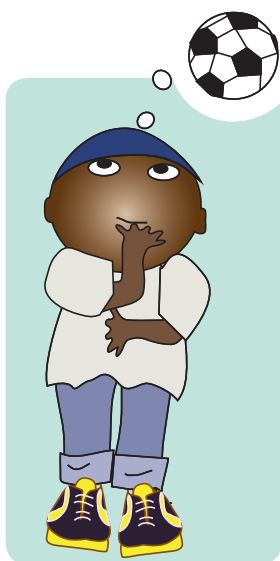


Sometimes boys are worried that other people can see their erections. It's probably more noticeable to the boy himself than anyone else.

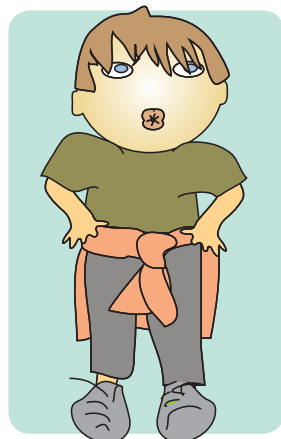
## COPING WITH ERECTIONS



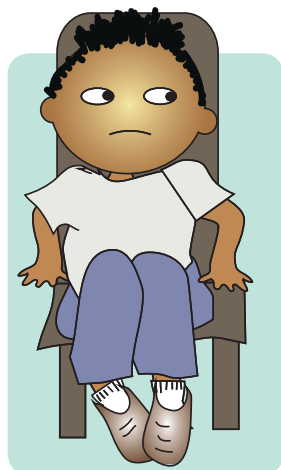
Wear bigger clothes.  
Put hands in pockets



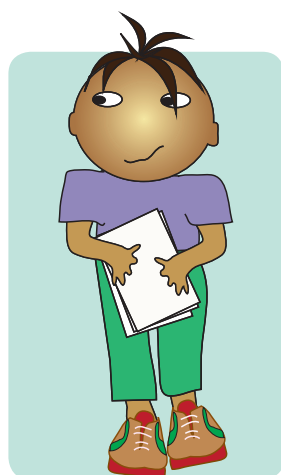
Think of something  
else until it goes away



Tie a sweat shirt around  
the waist with sleeves  
hanging down



Sit down until  
it goes away



Use a  
notebook  
or satchel to  
cover it

People enjoy sexual feelings without having sex, for example, by kissing and touching. Masturbation is a safe alternative to having sexual intercourse.



## MASTURBATION

Masturbation means touching or stroking your own genitals (vulva or penis) in a way that feels pleasurable (nice). This may lead to a hard-to-describe feeling of intense pleasure called orgasm. Both boys and girls masturbate and experience orgasm.

Most people masturbate at some time in their lives. This should be done privately. Some people masturbate more than others and unless it interferes with normal daily activities there is nothing harmful about it. The amount of time spent masturbating is different for everybody.

Some believe that masturbation will cause all sorts of strange things to happen. This is not true. Masturbation is not wrong or sinful.

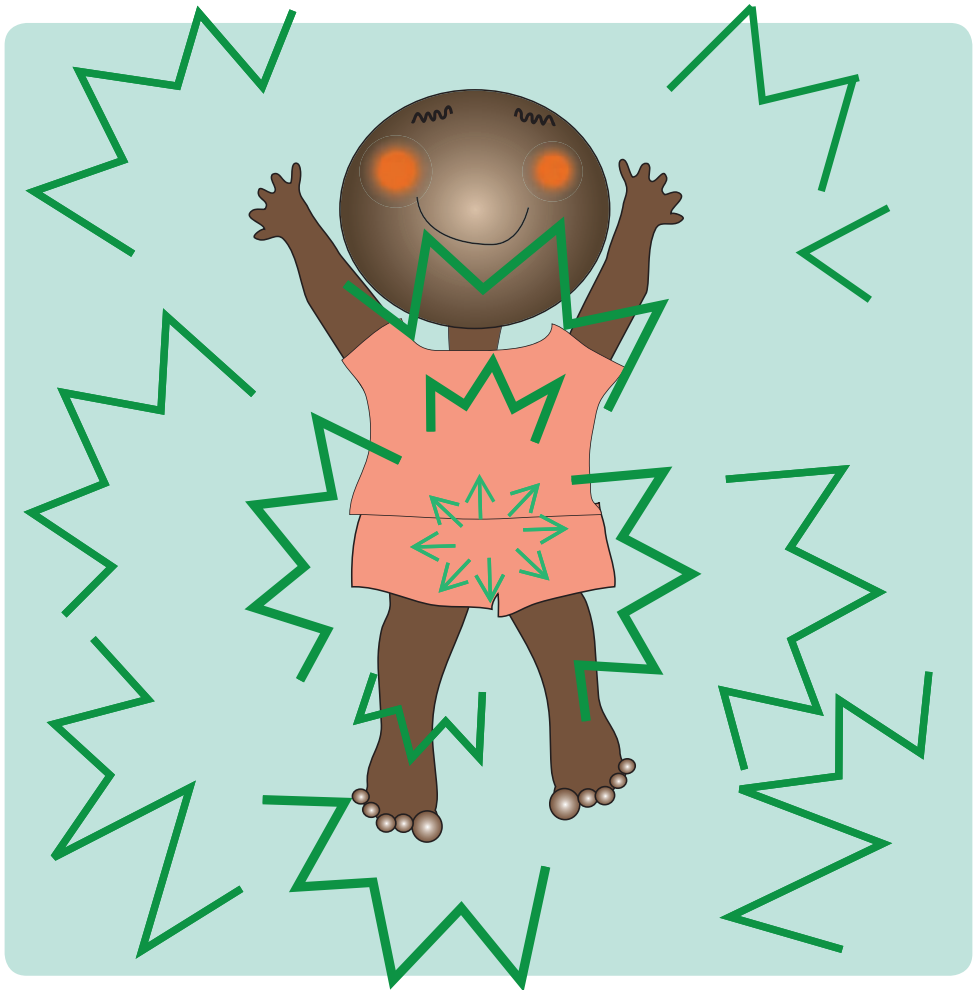
Thinking about things that are exciting while masturbating is completely normal. These are called fantasies.



# ORGASM

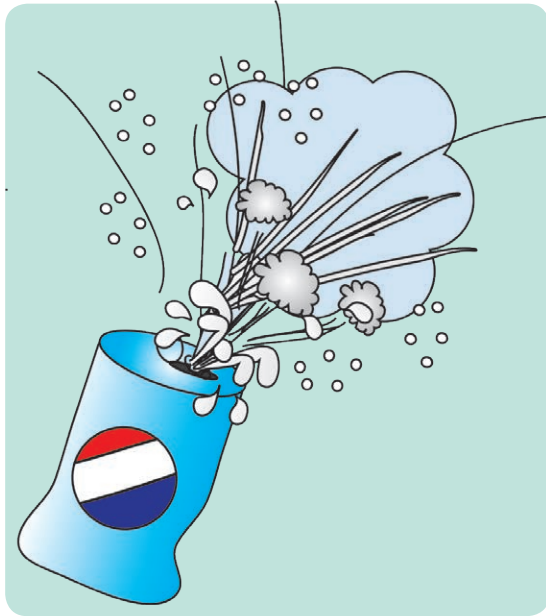
('coming')

It's difficult to explain exactly how an orgasm feels, but it is usually a very pleasurable experience. It is caused by muscles contracting (getting tight). When it happens, the brain releases lots of different hormones that make you feel good. The feeling starts in the genitals and moves outwards, sometimes affecting the whole body.



# EJACULATION

When boys have an orgasm (after the penis gets stiff and hard) the muscle spasms usually result in the semen spurting out of the penis, perhaps a bit like opening a cool drink can after shaking it. This is called ejaculation.



## What is ejaculation?

During ejaculation, a male has a very intense (strong) and pleasurable (nice) feeling that is known as an orgasm ('coming').

A small amount (about a teaspoon) of sperm, mixed with seminal fluid (semen) will come out from the opening in the tip of the penis. (This semen contains about 300 million sperm).

The testicles continue to make more sperm all the time.

Some boys have their first ejaculation during a wet dream, others as a result of masturbation or sex.



## WET DREAMS



Some boys have their first wet dreams during puberty.

### What is a wet dream?

Many boys have their first ejaculation while they are asleep. They wake up to find the bed or pajamas are a bit wet. This is called a 'wet dream'. Wet dreams are the body's way of practising to be sexually mature. They do not mean that a boy should start having sex.

## LOVE AND SEX

So, now we know quite a bit more about the physical changes that happen during puberty. Let's celebrate the changes in our bodies and our new feelings.

Let's also remember how important it is to have a trusted friend and/or adult to talk to if we are worried or uncertain about something.

### What love is NOT

Love is NOT violent

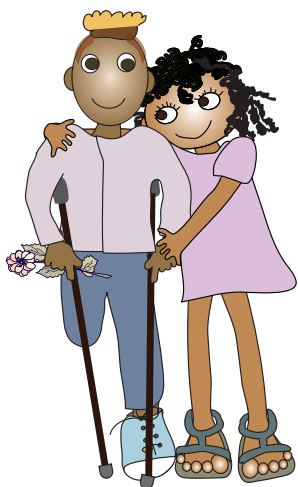
Love is NOT forced

Love is NOT having sex as 'proof'

Love is NOT...

What do you think?





## WHAT IS LOVE?

Around the time of puberty, you will begin to have more interest in people as romantic or sexual partners, sometimes having strong feelings of love that are different to your feelings for family and friends.

Here are some descriptions of what love is? Do you agree? How would you describe love?

- Love is a special feeling that fills our hearts.
- Love is putting ourselves in someone else's shoes and caring about how they feel.
- Love is treating others just as we would like them to treat us – with care and respect.
- Love is accepting and loving others just as they are and caring about them enough to help them to do better.
- Love is wanting to enhance another person's life.
- Love is respecting others.
- Love is catchy – it keeps spreading.
- We might show love in a smile, a pleasant way of speaking, a thoughtful act or simply being present.
- We might show love in a hug, or a kiss, or sexual activity – only if both people agree, every time! Remember, CONSENT.
- Love is being trustworthy.
- Love is sharing the good and bad times.



## GLOSSARY

The terms used in this book reflect widely accepted definitions, as well as definitions used by the United Nations (UN), the Mayo Clinic and various dictionaries. In some instances the terminology has been simplified.

**Adolescent:** A person aged 10 to 19 years, as defined by the UN.

**Assigned sex at birth:** A baby's sex label based on how the genitals look and, sometimes, on chromosomal testing. Assigned means given or attached.

**Bisexual:** A person who is attracted to (has emotional, physical or romantic feelings for) people of more than one gender.

**Child:** A person under 18 years of age, as defined by the UN.

**Chromosome:** A tiny threadlike structure, composed of DNA (the 'code' for how our bodies will look and work) and a protein, that forms when a cell begins to divide.

**Coercion:** Using force or threats to make someone do something.

**Discrimination:** Unfair treatment. This means denying anyone their rights or treating them worse than other people because of who they are or where they come from. This includes skin colour, sex or gender, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, marital status, education and economic background.

**Diversity:** Difference and variety. Including all different types of people in a group or organisation is a way of promoting diversity.

**Disability:** Any permanent condition of the body or mind that impacts on the way a person does certain activities. The condition may be present at birth, or it may be caused later by a disease or an injury. Some disabilities can be seen – for example, being without a leg. Other disabilities are invisible – for example, depression. People with disabilities face barriers in the physical environment, such as buildings not having ramps or lifts for wheelchairs. Negative attitudes also create barriers, such as denying a job to a person with a disability.

**Equity:** Fairness. This can mean equal treatment. It can also mean treating people differently to get rid of unfairness. For example, if someone cannot attend school because there is no space for their wheelchair, altering the building would promote equity.

**Gay:** A person who is mainly attracted to someone of the same gender. Commonly used for men, some women also use this term.

**Gender:** How people understand being male or female. It means how we are expected to look and behave depending on our sex. It also refers to relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as between women and between men. Gender norms vary in different societies. They also change over time. Ideas about gender roles can lead to inequality and harmful practices.

**Gender expression:** How a person expresses their own gender to the world, for example, through their name, clothes, how they walk, speak, communicate and behave.

**Gender identity:** A person's deeply felt personal experience of their gender. This may or may not match the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Gender non-conforming:** People who do not behave the way society thinks they should as a girl or boy may be called gender non-conforming.

**Gender variance:** Expressions of gender that do not match those predicted by a person's assigned sex at birth.

**Gender-based violence (GBV):** Violence against someone based on their gender, gender role expectations, or gender stereotypes. GBV may cause physical, sexual, emotional or psychological harm, or economic suffering.

**Genes:** Sets of instructions inside every cell of each living thing. They are passed on from parents on chromosomes (see above). Genes play an important role in how a person (or any animal or plant) looks, survives and behaves in their environment.

**Glands:** Organs (groups of cells) in the body that make hormones (see above).

**Harassment:** Behaviour that could cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions that make another person feel bad or frightened.

**Heteronormativity:** The belief that being heterosexual (straight) is the only normal way to be and that other sexual orientations are deviant or bad.

**Homophobia:** Fear, discomfort, intolerance or hatred of homosexuality (being attracted to the same sex) and people based on their real or perceived sexual orientation.

**Homophobic violence:** GBV based on the fact or the belief that someone is homosexual.

**Homosexual:** A person who is physically, emotionally or sexually attracted to people of the same sex.

**Hormones:** Chemical 'messengers' that help control what happens in the body and the mind.

**Informed consent:** Agreement to something based on having all the information you need to make a decision.

**Intersex:** Having sex characteristics (including genitals and internal reproductive organs and chromosomes) that do not fit typical notions of male or female bodies. The term intersex is used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, intersex traits are visible at birth; in others they are not apparent until puberty. Some intersex variations are not visible at all. Being intersex is a separate thing from a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. An intersex person may be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, and may identify as female, male, both or neither.

**Lesbian:** A woman who is physically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to other women.

**Puberty blockers:** Medication that delays puberty changes. Puberty blockers may be taken by children who start puberty very early. Some transgender and gender diverse children also take puberty blockers to give them time to explore their gender identity.

**Reproductive health:** Physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system. Reproductive health deals with the reproductive processes, functions and systems at all stages of life. It includes the right to have a satisfying and safe sex life, and to choose whether, when, with whom and how often to have children.

**Reproductive rights:** The human right of all individuals to make decisions freely and responsibly about having, or not having children. It includes having the information, education and means to act on those decisions (such as good quality sexual and reproductive health services).

**Sex:** a) Body characteristics used to categorise people either male or female (see also the definition of intersex).  
b) Sexual activities.

**Sexual health:** A state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

**Sexuality:** The different ways of being sexual, including sexual thoughts, feelings, attractions and behaviours.

**Sexual orientation:** Each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate relationships with individuals of a different

gender (heterosexual), the same gender (homosexual) or more than one gender (bisexual or pansexual).

**Stigma:** Opinions or judgements held by individuals or society that negatively reflect on a person or group. Discrimination occurs when stigma is acted on

**Transgender:** A person whose sense of their gender (gender identity) differs from their assigned sex at birth. Transgender is NOT a sexual orientation. Transgender people may be heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual just like anyone else. Transgender people may identify as male or as female or with an alternate gender, a combination of genders or no gender.

**Transsexual:** A term sometimes used to describe transgender people who have undergone or want to undergo medical procedures (such as surgical or hormonal treatment) to make their body match their gender identity.

**Transphobia:** Fear, discomfort, intolerance or hatred of transgender people.

**Transphobic violence:** GBV is based on the fact or the belief that someone is transgender.

**Violence:** Any action that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm.

**Young person:** A person between 10 and 24 years old, as defined by the UN.

**Youth:** A person between 15 and 24 years old, as defined by the UN. Some countries have different definitions of youth.

## REFERENCES

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The purpose of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is to make sure that learners have the life skills they need for health and wellbeing in relation to:

- Sexuality
- Human rights
- A healthy and respectful family life and interpersonal relationships
- Personal and shared values
- Cultural and social norms
- Gender equality and non-discrimination
- Sexual behaviour
- Consent and bodily integrity
- Prevention of violence, including gender-based violence
- Protection from sexual abuse and harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting.

(Definition based on *International Technical Guidance on Comprehensive Sexuality Education*, 2018: 16).

Young adolescents are diverse. They come with different abilities, face different challenges and live in different circumstances. It is every child's right, guaranteed in law, to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills to make conscious, healthy and respectful choices about their bodies, relationships, sexuality and wellbeing. CSE is critical to achieving this and the sustainable development goals agreed to by all members of the United Nations.



*Tell Me About the Changes in My Body* is a resource to help young people, caregivers, health and social workers to have comfortable, positive and factual conversations about Adolescence and Puberty. It is one of a series of resources designed to support objective, inclusive, age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

We welcome this very enlightening series, helping young people to make sense of the changes happening in their bodies. It celebrates the development of our unfolding sensuality and the uniqueness of every child. In demystifying our differences it promotes gender rights and responsibilities.

**Childline Gauteng**

This book is a wonderful resource for inter-generational dialogues about sexuality and rights. The child government monitors in my office liked the section on gender and sexual identities the most. It was forward-thinking, they commended. Sexual and reproductive rights for children should not be taboo. All of us are sexual beings before birth. Thanks for this treasure.

**Christina Nomdo**  
**Western Cape Commissioner for Children**

I loved the book because it teaches and elaborates more on our bodies, gender and sexuality. Most of the things in the book we were never taught at school and that's why I love it because I learnt a lot more. The book is very useful to me because whenever I feel stuck with something involving my feelings or body, I can refer back to it and I choose the right way.

**Vimbai Watambwa (age 15)**  
**Child Government Monitor, Western Cape**

**Micromega Publications**

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