Puberty made easy

Your Body is changing all the time. Think how much you've changed since you were a baby! Right now big changes are ahead.
Puberty

What is it?

Any time between age 9 and 16 gradual changes will be happening to you and your friends – this is called puberty. It is part of growing up and the changes happen at different times. We are all different!

As well as thinking and feeling different, you’ll find your body also starts to feel different.

What’s happening?

A gland in your brain called the pituitary gland is sending a message to your body’s organs to produce a chemical called a hormone. These hormones will slowly make you grow into an adult.

Girls and Boys

Girls

- Your periods happen at any time usually between 11 and 16 years old
- Your breasts will start to grow
- Your hips will broaden
- Your height and body will become larger

Boys

- Your skin is more likely to have spots
- Your hair begins to grow in different parts of the body
- Your skin and hair can become greasy
- You will grow taller

Your moods / feelings

Your moods can change from day to day, from happy to sad and this is not unusual. All of this is happening because your hormones are being made in your body, and hormones affect the way you feel.

What changes will I notice?

Girls

- Receptacle for ovum
- Ovaries
- Uterus
- Vagina
- Vagina

Boys

- Testicles
- Testicle
- Urethra
- Urethra
- Scrotum

Your body...

Essentially, sperm is produced in the testicles, which is called a scrotum, which hangs outside the body. It has a fluid that makes the sperm swim. An egg is carried to the cervix, which is called the uterus. It is a pink liquid that contains sperm.

A period has two uses

- To get rid of the blood
- To get rid of dead cells

Don’t be scared

Periods can be scary every month, but your body needs them to get all right. For the first year or two after your period, it is not normal for you to have sex. Make sure you change them regularly during your period.

What is a period?

Girls are born with thousands of tiny eggs inside their ovaries. During puberty your body starts to release an egg, roughly once a month. At the same time, the lining of the uterus (womb) thickens to make the egg sink into it. If a sperm meets the egg, then it is fertilized, and a baby will start to grow in the lining of the uterus. Usually, the lining breaks up and moves away. This is called your period. (Menstruation) It can last from 2 to 7 days or more.

The Menstrual Cycle

Periods should never be scary every month, but your body needs them to get all right. So be the first year or two after your period, it is not normal. When you don’t have sex. Make sure you change them regularly during your period.
**Question and Answers**

**Q.** Sometimes, I get moody, angry or tearful for no obvious reason.

**A.** Don’t worry, it’s due to your hormone levels changing and these can affect your emotions.

**Q.** Will my periods start unexpectedly while I’m swimming or diving PE?

**A.** Yes, they can do. It is best to be prepared and have a towel or tampon handy.

**Q.** My friends are all taller than me, is there something wrong?

**A.** No, during puberty everyone changes in shape and size. People grow at different speeds and sometimes can have a sudden growth spurt. You can help to keep your body healthy by eating a well-balanced diet, which includes lots of different types of foods. Getting enough sleep at night and regular exercise will help.

**Q.** Why do my breasts sometimes hurt during the month?

**A.** This is caused by the hormone levels in your body changing and it’s a sign that your period is due.

**Q.** Sometimes my mummy goes hard and this is embarrassing. Should I do something about this?

**A.** No, because this is a perfectly natural part of growing up.

**Q.** Where will my voice break and how will I know?

**A.** Your voice may change from day to day, from squeaky to deep, until finally it stops deepening.

**Q.** Can periods be painful?

**A.** Periods can be painful for some girls – you might have cramps or an ache very low in your stomach or back. Holding a hot water bottle against the part that hurts may make you feel better. If the pain is really bad talk to someone. Don’t suffer in silence.

**Q.** My friend has told me that tampons are not safe. Is this true?

**A.** There is something called Toxic Shock Syndrome, which can make girls very ill. To stop this happening, you need to change your tampons regularly (several times a day). Remember to wash your hands before and after you do this and always check that you have taken the last tampon out before you use a new one.

**Q.** Sometimes I find a wet patch on my shorts.

**A.** During puberty it is common for boys to release [premature] semen during sleep due to an exciting dream. This is called a ‘wet dream.’

**Q.** Does everyone get spots during puberty?

**A.** No, but boys or girls can get spots during puberty. It is important to keep your skin clean and eat a healthy diet. If the spots are really bad, your doctor or chemist may be able to give you something to help.

**Q.** I am starting to grow hair between my legs, is this normal?

**A.** Yes, both boys and girls will grow hair in this area. This is called pubic hair. Hair will also grow under the arms. Boys will grow hair on their chest and face.

If you are worried about anything in this booklet talk to someone – your parents, brother, sister, school nurse, teacher, or someone else you feel comfortable with.

**Puberty happens to everyone!!!**

Think of your favourite TV, pop or sports star – guess what? .........they’ve been through puberty just like you.

**Childline**

Will talk about any worry or problem that you may have.

**Calls are free – phone 0800 11 11.**

Leaflet designed with help from Class 7, Rawmarsh Ashwood Junior and Infant School.

Rotherham NHS

Health Authority