



Q & A

Answers to all those interesting questions about growing up.

Introduction

This booklet is based on common questions asked by young people about growing up. It aims to give you facts and information so you know what to expect and can feel positive about the changes that occur. This includes physical changes but also changes in the way we think, feel and relate to other people. Going through puberty and having questions about sex and sexuality are a normal and healthy part of growing up.

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Puberty

Puberty is a natural part of growing up. It is the period of time when our bodies change from being a child into a young adult. Things start to change and things start to grow. These changes affect the way people look, feel, think and how they relate to others. The process of puberty doesn't happen overnight, it can take a few years with changes happening gradually. Puberty can bring lots of mixed feelings - some of the changes may feel great, embarrassing, confusing, exciting or perhaps a mixture of feelings. It's not just physical changes we go through - our minds and our emotions can change as well.

The changes we experience during puberty are caused by hormones. Hormones are chemicals produced in the body. The main ones during puberty are testosterone for boys and estrogen and progesterone for girls. The production of these hormones is controlled by the pituitary gland which is located at the base of the brain.

WHEN WILL I GO THROUGH PUBERTY?

It's different for everyone. Puberty can start as young as eight years old for some people, but for many it often begins around the ages of 10 - 13. Changes can keep on going up until the age of 18. Girls often start puberty a couple of years earlier than boys. Try not to compare yourself with your friends as everyone changes in their own time. We all get there in the end.

WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES HAPPEN?

There are a large number of changes that happen to both boys and girls.

These can include:



Growing taller –

Sometimes this can happen quickly in growth spurts. Some people may also experience aches, particularly in their legs - this is caused by the bones growing fast, leaving the muscles to catch up.



Body hair –

Hair starts growing where it definitely wasn't before! Like under the arms, pubic area, on our faces or just more body hair in general. Pubic hair is hair that grows around the genitals. It may be a different colour to that which grows on our head - usually darker.

Sweat more –

During puberty our sweat glands are working faster and sweating or perspiration will increase. This means it's important to shower or have a bath daily and perhaps use deodorant to help control body odour (B.O). Remember, deodorant needs to go onto skin in order for it to work, not on clothes.

Body shape changes –

Just by looking around us we can see that there are a range of body shapes, sizes and heights – this is often determined by genetics. During puberty we become taller and our body shape changes. Girls become more curvy and the hips widen. Boys often become broader in the shoulders and muscles develop.

Pimples –

From puberty a fatty substance called sebum is released from the pores of the skin. Sometimes this increased oiliness can lead to pimples so we need to wash our faces regularly with a mild soap or cleanser and warm water. Pimples are a normal part of puberty, some people have more than others but they are usually temporary.





Mood swings –

Puberty brings a range of emotions and feelings and these can often change quickly. Someone might feel happy and positive, then feel angry or moody for no particular reason. This is very normal. However, if you feel bad or worried nearly all the time it's important to talk to a trusted adult, perhaps a parent, aunty or uncle or even someone at school.



Voice changes –

As the body grows so does the larynx or voice box. This causes the voice to become deeper. This is more noticeable with boys but even girls voices become a little lower. For boys, this is often referred to as the voice breaking. It doesn't happen overnight and can often go through a bit of an up and down or squeaky stage for a while.



Attraction –

We might start to have stronger feelings towards some people. They might be romantic or sexual feelings. It could be someone of the opposite sex to you, the same sex, or perhaps could be feelings of attraction to people from both sexes. These feelings are perfectly natural and all part of growing up.





Breast development –

This is definitely more noticeable for girls. It can be very common for boys to store fat in the chest area during puberty – this settles down.



Increased appetite –

With all the growing going on, we often feel hungrier and eat more. It's important to make sure we eat enough to help our bodies grow, especially lots of fruit and vegetables as we need all the vitamins and minerals. Drinking plenty of water is important too... and remember to eat breakfast!



A simple line drawing of a girl's body, showing her head, shoulders, torso, and legs. She has long hair and a neutral expression. The drawing is in a light green color with black outlines.

Girls' stuff

Along with the changes we just mentioned, girls also experience some changes that boys don't such as periods or menstruation. The first changes to happen to girls are usually pubic hair growth, breast development and vaginal discharge.

Body shape also changes with girls' bodies gaining weight, developing curves and the hips widening. Some girls are more curvy than others – we are all very different. Our bodies are also growing taller and breasts begin to develop.

Genitals – Our faces aren't all the same, and that goes for our genitals too. Labia can vary in colour, from light pink to dark brown. One outer lip may be bigger than the other or the inner lips may hang below the outer lips.

CLITORIS

Small sensitive bump that is purely there for pleasure. This means it can feel good when touched or stimulated.

VULVA is the name for the external female genitalia.

URETHRA

Opening where urine (pee) leaves the body.

VAGINA

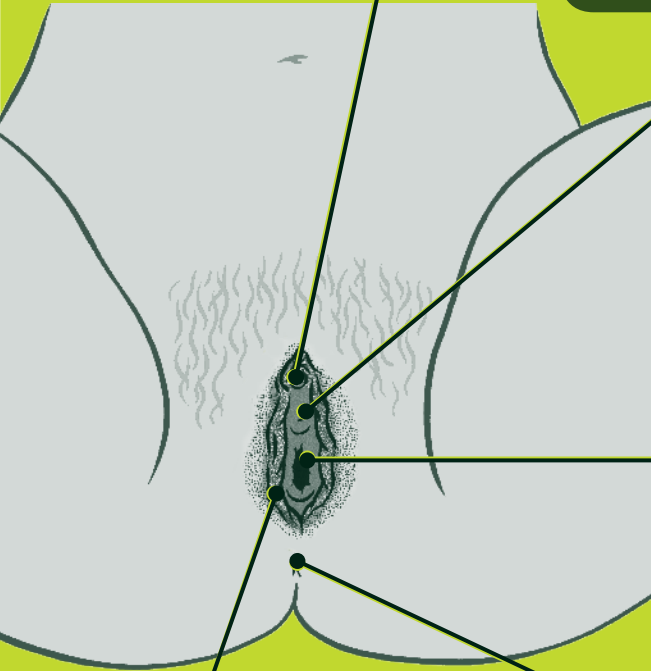
Vaginal discharge, menstrual blood and babies leave the body through this opening.

ANUS

Opening where solid waste leaves the body.

LABIA

Labia majora (outer lips) and labia minora (inner lips).



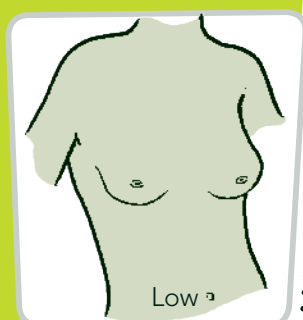
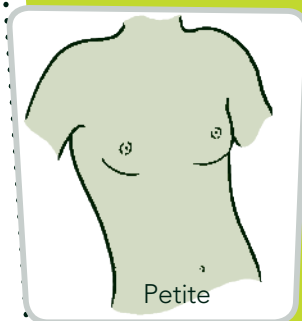
BREAST DEVELOPMENT

Breasts begin to develop usually any time between 9 and 14. Once they start growing they usually take 3 to 5 years to fully develop.

The size and shape of breasts is different for everyone. It's also common for one breast to be slightly larger than the other but other people aren't likely to notice.

Breasts can also be lumpy or tender at times too, especially when they are growing. Breasts can often be sore or tender just before a girl's period. Nipple size and colour can also be different for each person and this can change during puberty. For some people their nipples stick out, for others they might turn in (inverted nipples), some nipples are quite sensitive, others maybe not.

Nipples can also pop out more when it's cold, when you touch them or when having sexy thoughts. This is all very normal. Whatever the breast size and shape and colour, they are just right for you.



WHAT'S VAGINAL DISCHARGE?

Vaginal discharge is a natural fluid produced by the vagina – it is just a small amount and usually clear or whitish in colour. Some people might notice it in their underwear. This is normal and is designed to keep the vagina healthy. Often the body starts producing vaginal discharge before a female gets her period for the first time. Female bodies produce more or less discharge at different times of the month, depending on their menstrual cycle.

Also when females are sexually excited or aroused the vagina produces a natural lubrication which is clear in colour. This is a healthy bodily response and all very normal.

If someone is concerned that they have an unusual discharge that itches or smells, then it's best to see a doctor as these could be signs of an infection. Common infections such as thrush are easily treated.

PERIODS (MENSTRUATION)

Periods are a normal and healthy part of being a female. During puberty the female reproductive organs also begin to develop. When females are born there are hundreds of thousands of ova (eggs) inside their ovaries. During puberty hormones cause a tiny ovum (egg) to start maturing and be released from the ovary. This is called ovulation.



The **egg** moves along the **fallopian tube** towards the **uterus**.

At the same time the lining of the **uterus** becomes thick and soft with blood and tissue. This happens just in case the **ovum** (egg) is fertilised. It would then implant itself into the lining and grow. Fertilisation only happens if the ovum joins with sperm (from a male). However more often than not, the ovum isn't fertilised so it is just reabsorbed back into the body.

The lining of the **uterus** (blood and tissue) is not needed so it comes away and leaves the body through the **vagina**. This is called **menstruation** or a period. It is only a small amount of blood - approximately 3 tablespoons - and it leaves the body gradually.

A period usually lasts for 3 to 7 days. Some girls might have short periods, for others it might be a little longer. The time between the start of one period and the next is called the menstrual cycle.

Once females start having periods it means they are physically able to become pregnant and have a baby. This doesn't mean all females are having sex or will want to become pregnant – it depends on the person, if and when they choose. (Read more about pregnancy later on).

WHEN WILL I GET MY PERIOD?

Well that one depends on the person. Generally periods can begin anytime between the ages of 8 and 16. Periods usually start a year or two after other physical changes such as breast development, vaginal discharge and pubic hair. It is unlikely a period will start for the first time as a sudden gush. Someone is more likely to notice a reddish-brown stain in their underwear. Also, in the first year or two, periods can be very irregular. This means it may not be every month. A girl might have her period one month but not get it again for another couple of months. It can often take a year or two for it to settle down and become more regular. The menstrual cycle usually lasts 28 days, however for some females their cycles might be longer or shorter.

Often girls worry that everyone has their period except them, or the other way around. But don't worry, periods arrive when it is time for each individual girl – there is no right or wrong time.

DID YOU KNOW -
PERIODS EVENTUALLY STOP WHEN
A WOMAN GOES THROUGH
MENOPAUSE, USUALLY BETWEEN
THE AGES OF 45 AND 55.

WILL PERIODS HURT?

Some females might experience backache, a sore stomach or cramps when they have their period. Taking a pain killer or holding a hot water bottle/wheat pack on the stomach or lower back can ease the pain. Some find gentle exercise can also help.

Some females might experience Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) a week or two leading up to their period. Breasts may feel tender or seem slightly larger than they normally are. Someone might also feel moody, anxious or tired. Some people experience bloating, headaches or pimples. This varies from female to female and someone may notice more symptoms one month than another. For most females it is not a major problem and doesn't stop them doing the things they normally enjoy.

However, if someone is concerned about pain during periods or premenstrual symptoms it is worth speaking to a doctor or someone you can trust.

WHAT IS BETTER – PADS OR TAMPONS?

The answer to this question all depends on the person. Some females prefer pads, some prefer tampons and some females use both. Pads and tampons are used to absorb blood and they come in a variety of sizes depending on the blood flow.

Pads are made out of absorbent material and are sticky underneath. This allows them to be attached to the inside of underwear. Pads need to be changed at least every four hours through the day but can be worn overnight. Pads cannot be flushed down the toilet. It is best to wrap them in paper and put them in sanitary bins (if in a public toilet) or in the rubbish.

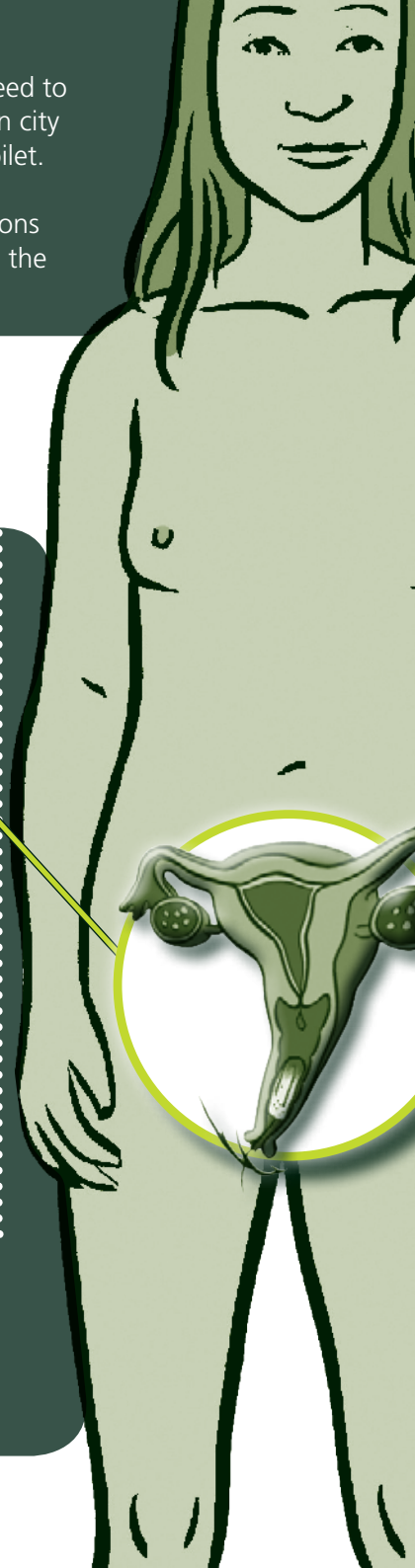
Tampons are also made out of absorbent material but squeezed together so they are small enough to be worn inside the vagina. Tampons come in different sizes and are either inserted with an applicator or with a finger. When tampons are in the right position they cannot be felt. If it feels uncomfortable it may not be in far enough. There is a string firmly attached so they can be removed



easily. The strings are very strong so there is no need to worry about it breaking off. For people who live in city areas, tampons can often be flushed down the toilet. However, if someone lives in a rural area or has a different water supply it pays to check first. Tampons will often need to be wrapped and disposed of in the rubbish.

A tampon is held in place by the muscles in the vagina so it won't fall out or disappear inside the body. Tampons, like pads, need to be changed every three to four hours. It can take a bit of getting used to inserting tampons, as there is a muscle inside the entrance to the vagina, so it is important to be relaxed. When someone starts using tampons, it is a good idea to try the smaller sizes and experiment with applicator and non-applicator ones to see which ones they prefer. All packets of pads and tampons contain instructions, so don't forget to check these out.

Remember, tampons can't get lost in the body as there is the cervix at the top of the vagina. Also, someone can still go to the toilet as females urinate (pee) out of the urethra which is a separate opening.



Whether someone uses pads or tampons depends on what they prefer, or perhaps what activities they are doing, or the blood flow. Tampons are a great idea when doing activities such as swimming during a period and pads are great for overnight. The choice is entirely up to the person.

There are also other products available too – such as washable/reusable pads and menstrual cups.

WHAT IF I'M OUT OR AT SCHOOL WHEN MY PERIOD ARRIVES?

If you don't have a pad or tampon on you then try asking one of your friends. If you're at school you could also go to the office or first aid room, they usually have a great supply. Don't forget you can also talk to a teacher or trusted adult. If you are out, pads and tampons are sold in lots of places including supermarkets, dairies and service stations. Some public toilets also have wall dispensers. Toilet paper can be placed in the underpants temporarily as well, until you can get hold of a pad or tampon. Some people like to tuck an emergency tampon or pad away in their bag, just in case.



Boys' stuff

Along with the changes like hair growth, voice deepening, sweat and pimples, boys usually experience changes such as erections, wet dreams and they start producing sperm. During puberty, the testicles start making a hormone called testosterone; this hormone is what starts to create changes in a boy's body.

Changes happen at different times for everyone. For males, puberty usually starts a little later than females – often around the age of 11 or 12. But for some it might be earlier or a little later – everyone has their own starting time.

During puberty the skin over the testicles and penis become larger and darker in colour. The penis and the testes keep on growing throughout puberty until they reach their adult size. Boys will also notice their body shape starting to change with their shoulders and chest getting broader and body becoming more muscular. The breast area and nipples may become sensitive for a short time. Breast development is common for boys during puberty – not as noticeable as for girls, but the body does store fat in the chest area for a little while. This is usually just temporary.

GENITALS –

SCROTUM –

Sack which holds the testicles (they make sperm), just behind the penis. The scrotum is usually darker in colour than the rest of the skin and is hairy. The scrotum hangs on the outside of the body because sperm need to be kept cooler than the internal body temperature.

PENIS –

Penises comes in all shapes and sizes – that's normal. The purpose of the penis is to carry urine (pee) and semen to the outside of the body. The penis has two main parts, a head (or glans) and a shaft. The head of the penis is much more sensitive than the shaft.

FORESKIN –

Sleeve of skin that surrounds the head of the penis. It's important to wash under the foreskin. All boys are born with a foreskin. Some males have a foreskin, some don't. When it is removed this is called circumcision.

URETHRA –

Opening at the end of the penis. This is where urine (pee) and semen (cum) leave the body.

Anus –

Opening where solid waste leaves the body.

DID YOU KNOW -

USUALLY ONE TESTICLE HANGS A LITTLE LOWER IN THE SCROTUM THAN THE OTHER ONE. THIS IS SO THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE KNOCKED TOGETHER WHEN DOING THINGS LIKE RUNNING.

WHAT'S AN ERECTION?

Flaccid



Flaccid



Erect



Erect



Erect



Erect



Most males have erections throughout their life, even as a baby. When a boy reaches puberty, erections become more common and may happen more frequently. An erection is when blood flows into the penis causing it to stiffen and stick out from the body. An erect penis is larger than a soft (flaccid) penis. Erections can happen with sexual thoughts, feelings or touch. Erections can also occur for no obvious reason, especially during puberty. Sometimes erections can be unexpected, but they are a normal part of growing up.

Suggestions for making unwanted erections go away: think of something really boring or wear certain clothing to make it less obvious e.g. board shorts when swimming.

DID YOU KNOW - THERE ARE NO BONES OR MUSCLES IN THE PENIS. IT IS MADE OF SPONGY TISSUE THAT FILLS WITH BLOOD WHEN ERECT.

TESTICLES HAVE TWO MAIN JOBS –

to produce sperm and to produce the male sex hormones such as testosterone. Testosterone causes the physical male characteristics such as body hair, more muscle and a deeper voice. Sperm is the male reproductive cell. Males are not born with sperm; they only start making sperm during puberty.

HOW IS SPERM MADE?

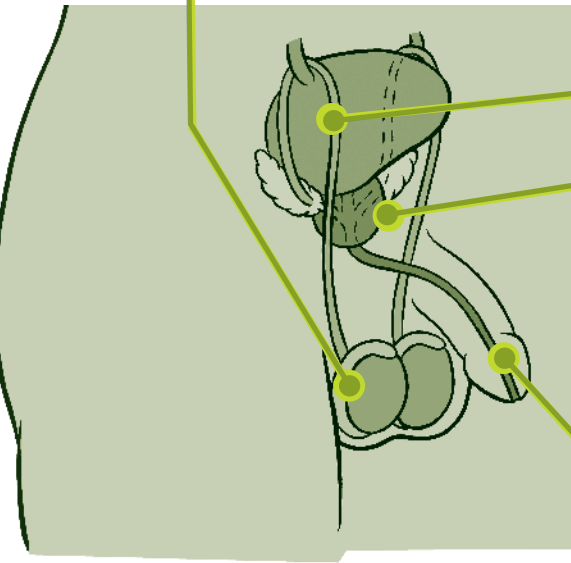
The hormone **testosterone** is needed for **sperm** to be made and to mature. They start out as a little round cell, then turn into a tadpole shape – they develop a little tail in order to be able to swim.

Sperm is made in the **testicles** and moves to the **epididymis** next to each testicle, to mature. In the epididymis the sperm practices its swimming and egg seeking skills.

When they are ready to go, the sperm is pushed up through the **vas deferens** (sperm duct).

Extra fluid from the **prostate gland** and **seminal vesicles** is added along the way. This fluid helps to keep the sperm healthy and to give it something to swim in. This mixture of fluid and sperm is called **semen**.

The semen then travels along the **urethra** and leaves the body through the end of the penis.



DID YOU KNOW - IT TAKES ABOUT 70 DAYS FOR SPERM TO MATURE AND TO LOOK LIKE LITTLE TADPOLES. IF SPERM DOESN'T LEAVE THE BODY, IT JUST GETS REABSORBED AND THE TESTICLES KEEP ON PRODUCING NEW SPERM.

WHAT IS EJACULATION?

Ejaculation is when semen (the fluid that contains sperm) leaves the body through the opening at the end of the penis (urethra). Ejaculation is also called 'coming' or 'cumming' and can only happen when the penis is erect. Often the first ejaculation happens when a boy is asleep (wet dream). It may also happen when a male masturbates or during sexual activity. There is usually only about a teaspoon of semen in each ejaculation but it can contain between 200 and 500 million sperm – they are tiny! Semen is usually whitish or milky in colour.

CAN YOU RUN OUT OF SPERM?

Definitely not. Testicles are very busy creating about 50,000 sperm per minute. This continues from puberty throughout a male's life, but it does get a little slower when males are in their older years.



WHAT'S A WET DREAM?

A wet dream (or nocturnal emission) is an erection and ejaculation while a boy is asleep. Wet dreams usually occur once a boy starts making sperm. Wet dreams are completely natural but not everyone notices they have them. Some boys may have them often, for others it may only be occasionally. Wet dreams may involve sexually exciting dreams, but sometimes they might not. Only about a teaspoon or less of semen is ejaculated and is easily cleaned by washing sleeping clothes or sheets.

WHAT'S THE AVERAGE PENIS SIZE?

This is a really common question. Penis sizes do vary but not as much as people think. The size they are when they are flaccid (soft) does not always determine the size they will be when erect. Often the larger a penis is when soft, the less it grows when harder/erect. Or the smaller it is when soft, the more it will grow. It is also very common for an erect penis to slightly curve to one side. When penises are erect they are very similar in size for all men. The size of the penis doesn't determine if you're a man or not – it's who you are and how you act. Remember, during puberty every part of our bodies are growing and developing, including the penis.

WHAT IS CIRCUMCISION?

Circumcision is where the foreskin of the penis has been removed. The foreskin is a sleeve of skin that surrounds the head of the penis. Circumcision is done for a variety of reasons, including for religious or cultural beliefs, or if the foreskin is too tight. Circumcision might occur not long after birth or for some cultures during puberty. Whether a penis is circumcised or not, there is no difference in being able to urinate (pee) or ejaculate (cum).

Uncircumcised



Circumcised



Feelings & Emotions

Puberty is not just about physical changes.

We also experience emotional and social changes. We develop new feelings and our emotions can change quickly. The way we think about things and how we relate to others may change as well. During puberty some people may want to spend more time with their friends and less with their family. We also might enjoy spending time on our own. We start to become more independent.



WHAT ARE MOOD SWINGS?

Mood changes or mood swings are very common during puberty. This is where someone may feel happy one moment then sad or grumpy the next. Sometimes we might get angry quickly and argue more with our friends and family. But on other days we're excited and love learning and doing new things. This is a normal part of growing up even though sometimes it might be confusing, to ourselves and to those around us.

If you feel down or worried nearly all the time, it's important to talk to someone you trust, perhaps an adult you trust at home or at school.

Puberty can also sometimes bring feelings of embarrassment and shyness. Some people are embarrassed to talk about puberty, and feel shy about their bodies and the changes they are going through. Just remember everyone goes through puberty – this means your parents, aunts and uncles, teachers, even your grandparents all went through puberty. We might feel excited or happy about some changes but we could feel confused or anxious about others.

With all the body changes going on during puberty, often people worry about how they look and feel self-conscious. Remember we are all different, this includes our body shapes and how we develop. Don't compare yourself with others and that includes people you see in magazines. Photos in magazines are always touched up – they can make people look taller, thinner, give them smoother skin, more curves, muscle definition etc.



Puberty can also bring feelings we might not have experienced before such as sexual feelings or feelings of attraction to other people. People may feel attracted and have romantic or sexual feelings towards someone they know or even someone famous, perhaps someone on TV or in movies. We might feel attracted to a person of the opposite sex to ourselves, or someone from the same sex or perhaps be attracted to people from both sexes. We are all different and there are a range of sexual orientations. Our sexual orientation (or who we are attracted to) is not something we choose, it is simply a part of who we are. Some people may start to develop relationships with other people, while others may not be interested until they are older.

When young people reach puberty they may also have sexual feelings, fantasies and feel like masturbating. Masturbation is touching or rubbing the genital area (and maybe other parts of the body too) in a way that feels pleasurable. Masturbation is a normal and healthy way of experiencing pleasure and learning about the body. It is a private activity so should be done in a private place where you won't be disturbed, like your bedroom. People of all ages might masturbate - some people choose to, while others may not – it is up to each individual person.



DID YOU KNOW- THE CLITORIS IS THE ONLY PART OF THE HUMAN BODY THATS SOLE FUNCTION IS PLEASURE.

HOW DO GIRLS/BOYS MASTURBATE?

That's a tricky one to answer as everyone is different and might find different things pleasurable. There are particular parts of the body that might be more sensitive than others. For males, this may involve rubbing/stroking the penis (and maybe surrounding areas). For females, this can include rubbing or touching the vulva (or parts of it). The clitoris in particular is a very sensitive part of the body and may feel very pleasurable to be touched. It's different for everyone. Masturbation is a way of exploring the body and finding out what feels good.

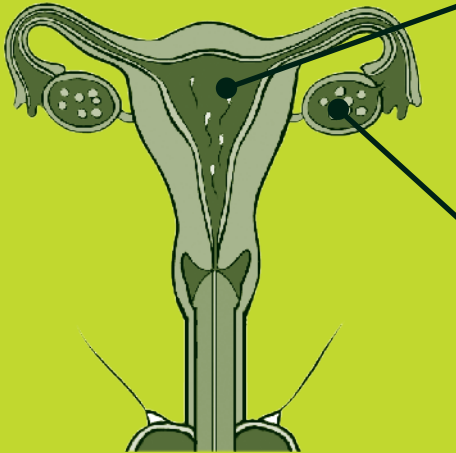
WHAT'S AN ORGASM?

An orgasm is usually a very intense pleasurable feeling. What it feels like can be different from person to person, or from day to day. Some people describe it as an intense feeling of release, or a rush of sensations after the build up of sexual arousal. It generally only lasts a few seconds. Some orgasms are big, some are smaller. For males, ejaculation often follows an orgasm. This is when semen is pushed out of the end of the penis. Females also experience orgasms too, with muscles contracting around the vagina and pelvis. Most people like orgasms as they usually feel great and are often followed by a relaxed feeling.

Other interesting stuff -

HOW ARE BABIES MADE?

In order for a baby to be made, sperm (from a male) has to meet an egg (from a female). This can happen when a male and female have **sexual intercourse** (penis in the vagina).



Sperm is released through the man's penis and travels through the female's cervix into her uterus and towards the fallopian tubes.

As part of a **female's menstrual cycle**, an ovum (egg) is released, this is called ovulation.

Millions of sperm are in search of the egg, however only one sperm is allowed into the egg. If a sperm manages to find the egg and get inside, this is when fertilisation takes place. Cells start to divide and multiply, to form a zygote. The zygote then travels towards the uterus where it will eventually implant and continue to develop. This whole process is called conception.

Fertility clinics can also help people to have babies; they can do this in a number of different ways.

WHAT ABOUT TWINS AND TRIPLETS?

Most women only have one baby at a time but sometimes there might be more than one baby. There are two types of twins (two babies); fraternal and identical. Fraternal twins are where two ova (eggs) have been released and they both get fertilised by two different sperm. These twins are not identical and may be two girls, two boys or a boy and a girl. Identical twins happen when one ovum that has been fertilised splits into two. Identical twins are always the same sex. Sometimes we see identical twins that may be joined together. This happens if the fertilised ovum has not completely divided in half, they are called conjoined twins. Triplets can also occur through separate fertilised eggs or when an egg splits.

WHAT'S INTERSEX?

Some people are born with genitals or reproductive parts that are not either all completely male or completely female. This is called "intersex." For some people the differences are visible; for others they are on the inside of their bodies.

Some people find out they are intersex when they are babies, some when they are older. Intersex is part of the wide range of different types of bodies people have.



HOW OLD DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO HAVE A BABY?

There is no right age to have a baby, although a young woman should wait until her body is fully matured. Every one should decide when it is right for them. It's usually a big decision that might be influenced by many things such as feeling emotionally ready to become a parent, financial reasons or having support from others.

HOW DO PEOPLE HAVE SEX?

There are many ways people have sex. Different people like different things. Sex should be fun and it should feel good. Certain parts of our bodies are more sensitive than others. It is important people talk to each other about what they like and don't like. Both people must agree to having sex, or sexual touch. This is called consent. Sexual activities without consent are against the law.

WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE SEX?

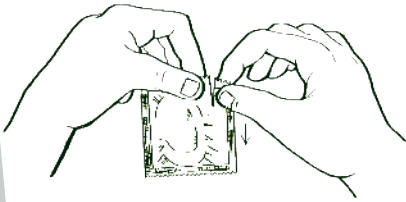
People have sex for lots of different reasons, perhaps to show love and affection or to make babies. Pleasure is a big reason as sex should feel good and be enjoyable. People might also choose to have sex for a combination of different reasons.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT AGE TO HAVE SEX?

There is no 'right' age to have sex. The age someone chooses to have sex is different for everyone. It needs to be when it feels right for that individual person. This can depend on their values, religion, if they're in a relationship or not, or lots of other different factors. As we get older we develop our own attitudes and values that help us to make decisions. What's important is that people choose to have sex when they feel ready. Often it can feel like everyone is having sex but that's not true. It is not legal in NZ to have sex with someone under 16. The average age in NZ is 17, but many wait until they are older. If someone isn't sure, the best advice is to wait.

IT'S **NOT** OK FOR SOMEONE TO BE PRESSURED INTO SEX, AND THERE ARE LAWS TO PROTECT THEM. IF THIS HAPPENS IT IS **NEVER** THEIR FAULT AND IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THEY TELL AN ADULT THAT THEY TRUST.

WHAT'S A CONDOM?



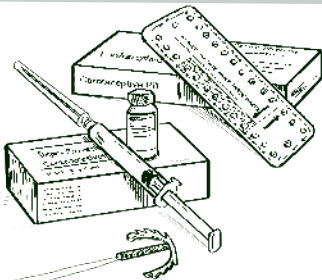
If people are choosing to have sex, it is important they think about whether they need to protect themselves from infections and unplanned pregnancy. Condoms are one of the many types of contraception available. Contraception is something that prevents unplanned pregnancy (stops the sperm finding the egg). Condoms also protect people against STIs (sexually transmissible infections). These are infections that can be passed on through sexual activity.

A condom is a thin piece of rubber that fits over the male's penis and catches the sperm on its way out. They are available

on prescription from doctors, Family Planning clinics, or can be bought at lots of different places such as supermarkets and chemists.

There are other forms of contraception available too such as the pill – these are taken by females. Someone might use the contraceptive pill for other reasons as well such as

to regulate periods or reduce period pain. There is no law that stops someone under 16 getting contraception if they need it. A person can get contraception at any age in NZ. For more information talk to your doctor.



Where to go for more information...

An adult you trust –

Perhaps a parent, aunty or uncle, friend's parent, older brother or sister or someone at school.

Books –

There are some great books out there about growing up. Check out the local bookstore or your school/public library.

Nurse or Doctor –

Either at school, local GP or Family Planning clinic.

Internet –

There is loads of information on the internet but remember we can't believe everything we read on the web.

Websites –

rainbowyouth.org.nz
youthline.co.nz

Teachers –

Sexuality Education is a compulsory part of the school curriculum, so you should learn about puberty and other sexuality related topics at school. Ask your classroom or health teacher when these topics are coming up.

Friends –

It's great to talk to friends about this stuff, but sometimes information passed on might not always be correct. So if you're not sure about something it's definitely a good idea to check with another source.

Telephone –

Youthline –
24hr Helpline
0800 37 66 33
Free txt: 234

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For further information and resources
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