

What's Happening to My Body?

What to Know

Puberty is the time when your body begins to develop and change to become an adult. Your body will grow faster than at any other time in your life except when you were a baby. Everyone goes through these changes, and for girls, puberty begins between the ages of 8 and 13, and for boys, between 9 and 15 years old. So, some of your friends may seem younger, while others seem older.

As your body adjusts to hormonal changes, your mind adjusts too. Your way of thinking and emotions can be very different from when you were younger. You may experience the following:

- dramatic body changes
- height increase - a "growth spurt"
- self-consciousness about body changes
- oily skin, which may include pimples or acne
- body odor
- confusion or strong emotions you've never had before, like feeling overly sensitive or getting upset easily
- mood swings - one minute, you're happy, and the next, you're sad or angry
- clumsiness or awkwardness
- shyness
- anxiety or worry about the appearance of your body

What can you do to reduce the unpleasant effects of puberty?

1. Take care of your body by keeping it clean and washing your hair daily. Shower every day, especially if you do sports or sweat a lot.
2. Wear clean clothes. Make sure to change your underwear and socks every day!
3. Use a deodorant with antiperspirant to reduce sweat.
4. Wash your face twice daily with warm water and a gentle cleanser.
5. Eat nutritious foods.
6. Exercise every day.
7. Develop skills and join activities that interest you.
8. Make sure to get enough sleep.

9. Learn how to manage stress.

10. If your clothes don't fit well because of all the changes in your body, you might feel more confident if you get new clothes that fit well. Ask your parents if you can buy some clothes, even if it's just a few items.

During puberty, you're likely to start feeling sexual desire. This doesn't mean you're emotionally ready for sex. It's a good idea to talk to a trusted adult about how to know when you're ready for sex and about practicing safe sex.

You might feel very uncomfortable with the changes your body is experiencing. You may be embarrassed or nervous to talk about puberty and all the changes you're going through. But it's important that you get answers to all your questions with correct information. You may want to talk to your friends, but they might not always provide accurate information. Talk to your parents or doctor if you're worried or have doubts.

What to Do

List three ways to practice good personal hygiene during puberty.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name three ways to manage stress.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What else can you do to manage all the changes?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Is there anything you find especially uncomfortable to talk about? Yes / No

If yes, explain. _____

Who can you talk to if you feel weird talking to your parents? You can talk to your doctor, the school nurse, a teacher, a coach, the school counselor, or any other adult you feel comfortable with. Who can you talk to?

When are you going to talk to them? _____

Write down your questions.

After talking to them, describe how it went. Did you feel comfortable? Why or why not? Did they answer all your questions? Why or why not?

Develop an Action Plan

Reflect on the changes you've noticed in your body and emotions since entering puberty. List physical changes you have noticed or describe emotional or mood changes you have experienced.

Assess your current hygiene habits and identify areas for improvement. Rate your current hygiene practices from 1 to 10, where 1 = needs a lot of work, and 10 = my hygiene couldn't be better: _____

Identify one hygiene habit you would like to improve and explain why.

List three stressors in your life right now.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Choose three stress management techniques and plan when and how you will use them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals related to managing the changes of puberty. This could involve improving hygiene, managing emotional changes, or increasing physical activity. Here is an example:

Goal: To develop a better skincare routine within the next month.

Action Steps: Research skin care for teens, create a daily skincare routine, and track progress.

Goal: _____

Action Steps:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Identify resources or individuals you can turn to for support. List three names and how they can be helpful.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____