

PUBERTY & THE BODY

Puberty is when you start to change from being a child into an adult. Hormones (chemicals produced by your brain) cause your body to change and grow. They also affect the way you think and feel.



This can start any time from seven to 16 years old. Not everyone develops at the same age or speed and it can take between two to four years to complete.

It's common to feel embarrassed about these changes but remember everyone goes through puberty. Knowing what to expect can make it easier to deal with.

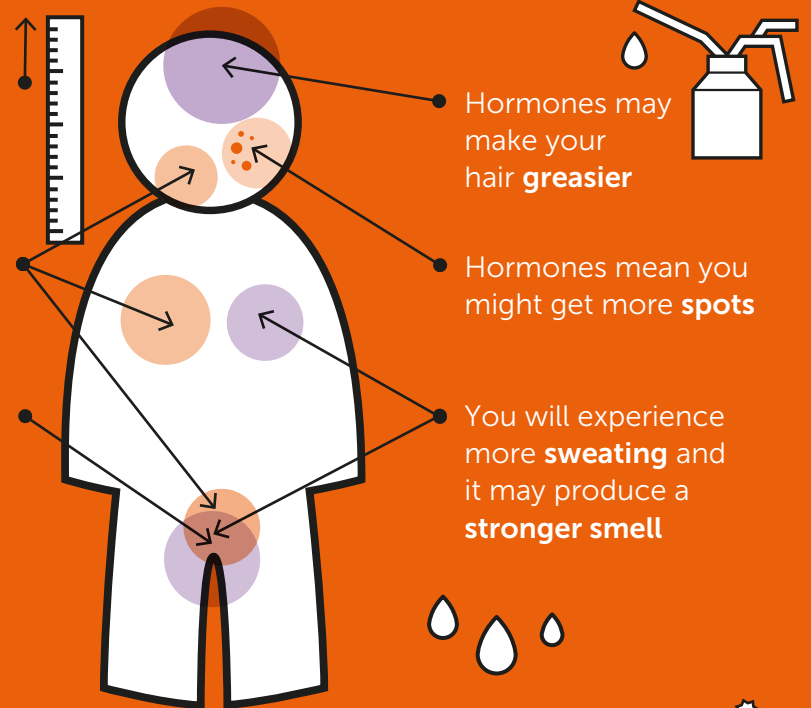


Growing taller

Hair will grow in new areas on your body such as armpits, genitalia, face, chest and legs.

You may want to **masturbate** (touch your genitals for pleasure)

WHAT CHANGES MIGHT YOU EXPERIENCE?



KEEPING CLEAN



Try to change your clothes and wash every day using soap or shower gel. Underarm spray such as deodorant (which covers up the smell) or antiperspirants (that stop or dry up sweat) can also help.

You'll also need to keep your genitals clean. Avoid strong products. Unscented soap and warm water is all you need. If you have foreskin (skin over the head of your penis) wash gently under it to stop it getting smelly, itchy or sore.



WHAT IS MASTURBATION?

You may find you want to explore your body and touch it in new ways. This is called masturbation and is a normal part of growing up.

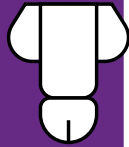
You may want to rub your penis until it gets hard (this is an erection) which might lead to ejaculation, when semen comes out of the penis.

Touching the area around your clitoris may lead to you feeling turned on and your vulva getting wet. This can lead to a very strong tensing feeling called an orgasm.



PUBERTY IF YOU HAVE A PENIS

- ▶ Your penis and testicles will grow larger
- ▶ Pubic hair will grow at the base of your penis
- ▶ Your muscles will develop and your chest will get broader
- ▶ Your voice will 'break' and get deeper
- ▶ You may have wet dreams and unexpected erections
- ▶ You may get hairier on your arms, legs and face
- ▶ This happens at different times for different people.



WHAT ARE WET DREAMS?

Wet dreams are when you ejaculate when you're asleep. Some people remember having a nice dream, but others just wake up to find a wet patch.



SHAVING

At first you might see some fine hair above your lips and on your chin. You can ask an adult you trust to help you choose a razor and show you how to use it. You won't need to shave every day at first or at all, if you don't want to.

REMEMBER:

Everyone is different. Genetics play a big role in how much hair you have.

WEARING A BRA

As your breasts grow it can be more comfortable to wear a bra. Ask an adult you trust to help you buy your first one and try to get measured to make sure you get the right size. It's normal to have one breast bigger than the other.



BODY HAIR

Some people prefer to remove body hair by waxing, shaving or lasering their legs, underarms and pubic area. It's entirely up to you how much or little hair you want on your body.

PUBERTY IF YOU HAVE A VAGINA

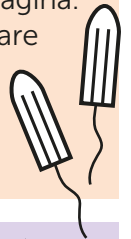
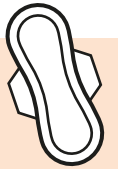
- ▶ Your nipples and breasts will start to grow
- ▶ Your body shape will grow more curvy
- ▶ Pubic hair will grow around your vulva
- ▶ Hair will grow under your arms and other places on your body
- ▶ You will start having periods between the ages of eight to 17

The external, visible part is the vulva. The vagina is the muscular tube which leads from the cervix to the vulva.

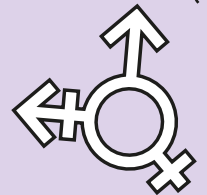


WHAT ARE PERIODS?

Every month the ovaries release an egg and the lining of the womb thickens. If the egg isn't fertilised, the egg and womb lining leave your body through your vagina. This is a period. It usually last a few days and you'll need to wear a period pad in your pants, or put a tampon in your vagina. Cramps in your tummy or back are common. Some people feel tense or emotional before a period starts (known as PMS).



PUBERTY IF YOU ARE TRANS



For some of us, our bodies and our gender don't match up. You may feel female and have a penis, you may feel male and have a vulva or may feel like a mix of the two. This is known as being trans, transgender, or genderqueer and can make puberty extra complicated. You can read more about gender at brook.org.uk/gender