

# Puberty, day 1

Grades 4-6, Lesson #9

## Time Needed

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50-60 minutes

## Student Learning Objectives

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To be able to ...

1. describe the physical, emotional and social changes of puberty.
2. explain that puberty is triggered by the endocrine system, specifically the pituitary gland.
3. distinguish among definitions of erection, menstruation, nocturnal emission, ovum, puberty, and sperm.
4. explain the purposes of bras, athletic supporters and menstrual hygiene products.

## Agenda

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1. Explain reasons for this lesson.
2. Use film to define "puberty" and introduce major concepts and terms OR
3. Use brainstorm to review Activity #2 and to compare and contrast male and female development.
4. Use "visual aids" to discuss athletic supporters, bras, and menstrual supplies.
5. Use *Puberty Worksheet #1* to review terms.

This lesson was most recently edited August, 2009.

## Activity

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### 1. Explain reasons for this lesson.

Explain that everyone here either has begun or will soon begin to develop from a child into an adult. This lesson will help them understand the changes that involves.

### 2. To explain terms and concepts, you may want to kick off this lesson with an audio-visual tool.

That said, we have not found a puberty film produced in the last decade that we can recommend ... one that is inclusive and respectful (neither condescending nor reinforcing of gender stereotypes). If you find one, please contact us so that we (at Public Health – Seattle & King County) might preview it to recommend to other **FLASH** curriculum users: [beth.reis@kingcounty.gov](mailto:beth.reis@kingcounty.gov). And always make sure you have district approval and that you have previewed materials personally before using them in the classroom.

### 3. Or you may want, instead, especially if they had a session on puberty last year, to launch right in to more active student participation.

Ask for a volunteer or two to **define puberty**. Thank them and build on what they said, so you end up defining it as **a time when a person's body, feelings and relationships change from a child's into an adult's**.

Ask the class when that happens. **Be clear that knowing an average age is kind of useless, since most of us aren't "average." A range is more useful.** It is normal to start noticing changes, for a girl, any time between about age 8 or 9 and age 13.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Guys, on average, start noticing changes a little later, between about ages 9 or 10 and 14.<sup>4,5</sup> And puberty isn't an overnight process; it can take several years to complete. Longer in boys, on average, than girls. If someone gets to be 16 and still hasn't noticed any changes in their body, they might want to chat with a doctor. Remind people that puberty involves changes in not only your body but also your feelings and relationships. So your friend's body might start maturing first, but you may be maturing emotionally and socially sooner than your friend. And it isn't a race, anyway. The **pituitary gland**, in a person's brain, will trigger the changes of puberty whenever it is programmed to do so. Younger for one person; older for another.

Have the class **brainstorm puberty changes** as you write them on the blackboard. Then help them distinguish changes that happen **(a) to boys only, (b) to girls only, and (c) to both**. And finally discuss and answer questions about each item. Changes to be sure to include:

<sup>1</sup> The American Association of Pediatrics. (2005). *Puberty Information for Boys and Girls - Public Education Brochure*. Retrieved June 15, 2009 from Teen Q & A Web site: <http://www.aap.org/family/puberty.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Steingraber, S. (2007). *The Falling Age of Puberty in U.S. Girls: What We Know, What We Need to Know*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from Breast Cancer Fund Web site: [http://www.breastcancerfund.org/site/c.kwKXLdPaE/b.3266509/k.27C1/Falling\\_Age\\_of\\_Puberty\\_Main\\_Page.htm](http://www.breastcancerfund.org/site/c.kwKXLdPaE/b.3266509/k.27C1/Falling_Age_of_Puberty_Main_Page.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Family Practice Notebook. (before May 10, 2008). *Female Tanner Stage*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from <http://www.fpnotebook.com/Endo/Exam/FmlTnrStg.htm>

<sup>4</sup> The American Association of Pediatrics. *Puberty Information for Boys and Girls - Public Education Brochure*.

<sup>5</sup> Family Practice Notebook. (before May 10, 2008). *Male Tanner Stage*. Retrieved August 14, 2009 from <http://www.fpnotebook.com/Endo/Exam/MLTnrStg.htm>



- **genitals enlarge (both)** – This is more obvious for a boy, since he looks at his penis and scrotum every time he uses the bathroom. A girl is less likely to notice, but her vulva (labia and clitoris) get bigger at puberty, too.
- **erections happen more frequently (more noticeable in boys)** -- Explain that an erection is what you call it when the penis or the clitoris fills up with blood and gets harder and bigger. Everyone gets erections, even babies. In fact, ultrasounds show us that male fetuses in their mothers' uteruses are already getting erections. Presumably female fetuses do, too, but their clitorises would be too tiny to be visible in an ultrasound. Erection is perfectly healthy and it happens sometimes when you are thinking of something sexual or of someone you like, but it also can happen, especially at puberty, for no apparent reason. A guy may find it embarrassing when he has one in public, but he can just carry something in front of him if it does. And it may help to know that it happens at some point to almost all guys.
- **sperm production and ejaculation begin (boys)** – Explain that sperm are the microscopic cells from a man's body that can start a pregnancy, when they combine with a woman's egg cell. And ejaculation is what you call it when the sperm come out of his penis (in a fluid called "semen"). A man may ejaculate during sleep, masturbation, or sexual touch with a partner. Once he's able to ejaculate, he's able to help start a pregnancy. That's not to say he's ready to be a good dad yet, but it is biologically possible to make a baby.
- **nocturnal emissions begin (many boys)** – The slang term for nocturnal emission is "wet dream" (but it isn't offensive slang). Some boys – not all – will ejaculate during their sleep. They may or may not have been dreaming at all. The wet dream can be their body's response to the higher level of hormones in their bloodstream during a growth spurt. But guys should know that not everyone has nocturnal emissions and there's nothing to worry about whether they do or don't. Some guys find them very personal and will prefer to wash their own bedding when they have a wet dream.
- **ovulation and menstruation begin (girls)** -- – The slang term for ovulating is "releasing an egg;" the slang term for menstruating is "having a period" (neither of these are offensive slang). Explain that about once a month, starting at puberty, one or the other of a girl's ovaries will allow an egg or, in Latin, an "ovum" to mature and pop out. That's called ovulating. It usually travels into the nearest fallopian tube. If she has had sexual intercourse and there is sperm in that fallopian tube, it may fertilize the egg. The fertilized egg will travel the rest of the way down the tube and, in a week or so, it will nest, or "implant," in the uterus to begin growing into a baby. In the meantime, the uterus has developed a thick, blood-rich lining to be a good nest in case she did get pregnant. If that egg doesn't get fertilized, though, it will live for only about 24 hours and then dissolve and be reabsorbed by her body. The uterus will wait a couple of weeks, in case the egg did get fertilized, with support from her body's hormones. Then, after a couple of weeks, if no egg has implanted, the hormone level will drop and her uterus will, basically, give up on her being pregnant that month. The lining will come out in the form of blood and little pieces of tissue, through her vagina ... so that she can build up a fresh new lining the next month in case she gets pregnant. The shedding of the lining is called menstruating. A woman doesn't have muscles to control when her period comes out, the way you can control when urine comes out. It will just dribble out for 2 to 10 days. That's why she'd need a pad or a tampon to soak it up. If she doesn't have one handy when she happens to get her first period, a bunch of toilet paper will do briefly, until she can



- **friction with parents or guardians may grow (both)** – Explain that a preteen or teen and a parent or guardian probably both want the same thing in the long run ... for the teen to grow up and become more independent. But sometimes you feel like a little kid and want to get taken care of and other times you prefer to think for yourself. The adults in your life go through similar changes as you're going through puberty, sometimes wanting to make decisions for you because they're afraid you'll get hurt and other times ready to let you try your wings. If you aren't on the same page at the same time, there can be – and often are – some times of struggle. That doesn't mean you don't love each other. Most families get through it eventually.
- **freedom to make decisions grows (both)** – People's parents and guardians often trust them with more of their own choices, especially as they take on more responsibilities.
- **understanding of self may grow (both)** – Explain that means beginning to gain more of a sense of who you are and that, as this happens, a person gets more self-confident.

#### 4. Use visual aids to introduce "products" for newly adolescent bodies.

Show and discuss an athletic supporter, a bra and several kinds of menstrual hygiene products (a tampon with applicator, a tampon without, a maxi-pad, a mini-pad). Discuss:

A) What is each one for?

B) How does a person decide when to use these?

Be sure to mention that:

- "deodorant tampons/pads" are unnecessary, and can be irritating. A daily bath or shower is sufficient for cleanliness.
- which menstrual hygiene products are "best" is a personal decision and sometimes a girl's family and culture may have strong opinions about it, but that medically, they are all OK

#### 5. Hand out "Puberty Worksheet #1" and use it as a discussion tool.

Answers:

1. b having a period = menstruation
2. a the penis or clitoris filling with blood and getting larger = erection
3. f the cell from a man that can start a pregnancy = sperm
4. c sperm coming out of the penis during sleep = nocturnal emission
5. d the "egg" cell from a woman that can start a pregnancy = ovum (plural = ova)
6. e a child's body beginning to change into an adult's body = puberty
7. g the gland in the brain that triggers the beginning of puberty = pituitary



# Puberty, day 2

Grades 4-6, Lesson #10

## Time Needed

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40-50 minutes

## Student Learning Objectives

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To be able to ...

1. Distinguish puberty facts from myths.
2. Anticipate puberty with positive feelings, recognizing that the timing of change is individual.

## Agenda

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1. Review purpose of lesson.
2. Respond to "Anonymous Question Box" questions re: puberty.
3. Use *Puberty Worksheet #2* to reinforce facts and debunk fears/myths re: puberty.
4. Summarize by discussing peer pressure in the puberty years.

This lesson was most recently edited May 20, 2013.

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**Activity**

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1. Explain again the reasons you are doing these lessons on puberty.
  - o Sometimes people are afraid of things they don't understand.
  - o Sometimes people feel as if they are the ONLY one to ever experience certain changes; they may "dump on" themselves because they think they aren't normal.
  - o Those feelings are UNNECESSARY; people can look forward to puberty with excitement and pleasure, IF they know what to expect!
2. Respond to "Anonymous Question Box" questions re: puberty (see lesson 1 for setting up an anonymous question box or boxes).
3. Use *Puberty Worksheet #2* to reinforce facts and debunk fears/myths re: puberty.
  - a. Divide the class into 3 teams.
  - b. Hand out *Puberty Worksheet #2* and give the teams 20 minutes to reach consensus (within each team) on each item. Encourage people to discuss the items they disagree on, to explain to one another why they believe as they do about an item.
  - c. Have one spokesperson for each team write their team's responses on the blackboard and explain, one at a time, why they chose a particular answer. You can award 1 point for each correct answer and an extra ½ point to the team with the best explanation. The team with the most points "wins" although we would encourage you to award prizes, if you do that, to anyone who participated actively.
4. Summarize by discussing peer pressure in the puberty years.

Discuss how it felt to disagree with teammates, whether there was overt peer pressure to agree (for consensus) or whether each person was considerably listened to. Summarize the lesson by explaining that, at puberty, it is probably more difficult than at any age before or after to disagree with the crowd BECAUSE one is beginning to separate from one's family and to gradually identify more with friends. That is normal...and one has to find ways to trust one's own judgment AT THE SAME TIME as one enjoys one's friends.

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**Related Activities For Integrated Learning**

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**A. Language Arts**

Add to glossary, the terms "endocrine system," "erection," "hormone," "menstrual period," "nocturnal emission," "ovum," "penis," "pituitary gland," "sperm," "uterus," and "vagina".



# Puberty Worksheet 2

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Write "T" for "true" next to each statement you believe is correct.  
Write "F" for "false" next to the wrong statements.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Girls may start puberty any time between the ages of 8 and 13.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Usually, boys start puberty a little younger than girls.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The pituitary gland, in the brain, tells the body when to begin puberty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Boys only get erections when they think about something sexual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A person's feelings may change from moment to moment, especially during puberty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. If your parents started puberty early, you might too.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. You can tell whether a girl is menstruating by looking at her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Boys often have some breast growth during puberty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. It is common for boys to have nocturnal emissions at puberty, but it is also healthy not to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The main reason teenagers get acne is they eat the wrong foods.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Girls should not use tampons until they are grown.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The vagina is always wet, just like the mouth and eyes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. There is something wrong with a boy if he ejaculates in his sleep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. If a boy has not started puberty by age 13, he should see a doctor, because there might be something wrong with his endocrine system.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. It is OK for a girl to shower or play sports during her menstrual period.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. A boy should start wearing an athletic supporter ("jock strap") during puberty when he plays sports, to protect and support his genitals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. A girl may start wearing a bra for support when her breasts start to develop, especially if she is uncomfortable being active and playing sports.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. It is necessary to wash more often once you begin puberty.

## Puberty Worksheet 2 - Answer Key

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Write "T" for "true" next to each statement you believe is correct.  
Write "F" for "false" next to the wrong statements.

- T   1. Girls may start puberty any time between the ages of 8 and 13.
- F   2. Usually, boys start puberty a little younger than girls.
- T   3. The pituitary gland, in the brain, tells the body when to begin puberty.
- F   4. Boys only get erections when they think about something sexual.
- T   5. A person's feelings may change from moment to moment, especially during puberty.
- T   6. If your parents started puberty early, you might too.
- F   7. You can tell whether a girl is menstruating by looking at her.
- T   8. Boys often have some breast growth during puberty.
- T   9. It is common for boys to have nocturnal emissions at puberty, but it is also healthy not to.
- F   10. The main reason teenagers get acne is they eat the wrong foods.
- F   11. Girls should not use tampons until they are grown.
- T   12. The vagina is always wet, just like the mouth and eyes.
- F   13. There is something wrong with a boy if he ejaculates in his sleep.
- F   14. If a boy has not started puberty by age 13, he should see a doctor, because there might be something wrong with his endocrine system.
- T   15. It is OK for a girl to shower or play sports during her menstrual period.
- T   16. A boy should start wearing an athletic supporter ("jock strap") during puberty when he plays sports, to protect and support his genitals.
- T   17. A girl may start wearing a bra for support when her breasts start to develop, especially if she is uncomfortable being active and playing sports.
- T   18. It is necessary to wash more often once you begin puberty.



## Grade 5 Lesson 1

# HIV Overview: Immune System

### Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to help students learn basic information about HIV and AIDS, to learn how the immune system works, to identify behaviors that do and do not put individuals at risk for HIV infection, and to review ways to protect against acquiring and transmitting HIV.



**NOTE:** Teachers need to be prepared to respond to unexpected questions from students regarding sexual health, even though they are not part of the planned presentation. See introductory section on tips for answering different types of questions.

### Laws & Standards

The 5/6 KNOW Curriculum, 2014 edition, complies with the AIDS Omnibus Act and partially fulfills the Healthy Youth Act (2008). It aligns with the WA State Health and Fitness Standards (2008), the WA State Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention (2005), the National Sexuality Education Standards (2011), and current research on the prevention of HIV and other STDs. Please see the introduction for more details, including information on how to fully comply with the Healthy Youth Act.

### Objectives

The students will:

- \* Understand how the immune system functions
- \* Distinguish between the ways HIV is and is not transmitted
- \* Know ways to protect against acquiring and transmitting HIV

## Grade 5 Lesson 1

# HIV Overview: Immune System

### Activity 1

### Introduction and Ground Rules

Time: 10 minutes

1. Introduce the topic of HIV.

*"Today we're going to learn about HIV and AIDS, and about how our immune system works. Some of you may have learned about HIV before, and for some of you, this will be a new topic. HIV is a very serious illness that can cause death. It's important to know that many people who have HIV live for a long time with the help of a doctor. The way HIV hurts the body is by hurting the immune system, which is the system in our body that keeps us healthy. For that reason, today we will also learn about the immune system with a fun activity. This is an important subject, and I'm looking forward to sharing this information with you."*

2. Share ground rules with the class. Write them down as you cover each one.

*"Even though we already have rules for classroom behavior, I'm going to go over class rules especially for this topic. I want to help everyone feel comfortable asking questions and participating in the lessons. I'm going to start by giving you my ideas, and then I'll ask if you have any others to add."*

- \* Ask questions. (Tell the class you will do your best to answer all questions or find the answer, if you don't know it.)
- \* No put-downs.
- \* It is okay to disagree.
- \* Listen and be respectful of others' opinions.
- \* Protect people's privacy. For example, questions about friends and family members should not include their names or identities. Instead, say "Someone I know..." or "Someone I heard of..."

3. Ask the class if they have any ground rules to add. Add them to the list.
4. Ask for a raise of hands to show agreement with the ground rules.



## Grade 5 Lesson 1

# HIV Overview: Immune System

### Activity 2 cont.

### Review of Basic Facts

- \* If students are confused by “sharing needles for drugs,” here is an age-appropriate clarification: *“Sometimes when people use drugs, they put the drug into their body with a needle. If two people are taking drugs with the same needle, a little of one person’s blood gets in the other person’s body. If one of the people has HIV, they can pass HIV to the other person.”*
- \* *“The other way people get HIV is that if a woman has HIV when she is pregnant, sometimes the baby is born with HIV.”*
- \* *“If a person has HIV, the HIV virus is in their blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk. That’s why people can get HIV from sex, sharing needles, or sometimes from a mom when they are born or while they are breastfeeding.”*
- \* *“HIV is NOT in other body fluids – it is not in tears, sweat, spit, pee, or any other fluid. A person cannot get HIV from being around someone with it. They can’t get it from hugging or kissing. They can’t get it from a mosquito bite or from a toilet seat.”*
- \* *“We are talking about HIV now, even though kids your age almost never get HIV, so you can learn what you need to know when you are older to keep yourself healthy.”*

### Activity 3

### Presentation on the Immune System

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

- \* Immune System visual
- \* Immune System labels, quantities given on label page
- \* Immune System script, cut in strips, 1 set per class
- \* Tape
- \* Two noisemakers

#### ARTS CONNECTIONS

On a day prior to this demonstration, have the class create costumes for the actors complete with labels. Also, you may want students to practice the performance to give at a teacher’s or parent’s meeting.

## Grade 5 Lesson 1

# HIV Overview: Immune System

### Activity 3, cont.

### Presentation on the Immune System

#### STEP 2: Set up the demonstration

- \* Let students know that now we will see how HIV affects the immune system. The class will be acting out how the immune system works, and how HIV affects it.
- \* Select 23 volunteers to serve as actors, with the remainder of the class serving as readers. Alternatively, the teacher can read the script. Tell students this is not a competitive game, and you don't want anyone to get hurt doing this activity, so it's important that they follow your instructions carefully. Hand out scripts in numerical order to readers (if students will be reading).
- \* Place 6 actors playing "**White Blood Cells**" to form the inner circle, holding hands, and facing out. Give 2 of the students noisemakers.
- \* Place 10 actors, five playing "**Skin**" and 5 playing "**Mucous Membranes**" to form the outer circle, holding hands, also facing out.
- \* Place 4 actors, 2 labeled "**Virus**" and 2 labeled "**Bacteria**" outside the two circles (not holding hands).
- \* Place 3 actors playing "**Rare Diseases**" on the sidelines until needed.
- \* Place the "**HIV**" label aside for YOU to wear later. IMPORTANT: Do not assign this role to a student.
- \* Remind students of ground rules and tell them to remember that volunteers are playing a role, not speaking for themselves, and everyone should show respect to all of the performers.



## Grade 5 Lesson 1

# HIV Overview: Immune System

### Activity 3, cont.

### Presentation on the Immune System

- \* Next, have students demonstrate how a healthy immune system works to fight illness: *"Now we are going to act out what happens to the immune system when someone gets sick."*

Script	Directions
4. "This person was exposed to germs that got in their body through a mucous membrane or through a cut."	Direct <b>Bacteria</b> and <b>Virus</b> to try to enter the body and to do so successfully.
5. "Once germs are inside the person's body, sometimes a person's immune system can fight them off right away, and sometimes it can't. When it can't, that is when a person gets sick. Even though it might take a little while for the immune system to fight off the germs, it usually does in the end."	Once the invaders are past the outer circle, the <b>White Blood Cells</b> with the noisemakers should sound the noisemakers softly, gradually getting louder. The inner circle should act confused and uncoordinated at first, but then should start working together.
6. "Everyone gets sick sometimes. It's no fun, but they do get better once the immune system fights off the germs."	Eventually, the inner circle should muster up enough strength to throw out the invaders.

## Grade 5 Lesson 1

# HIV Overview: Immune System

### Activity 4

### Staying Healthy and Family Connections

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: HIV/AIDS Family Newsletter, 1 per student

Remind class that kids their age almost never get HIV. Brainstorm with the class what are some important things people should do when they are older to protect themselves from getting HIV.

Make sure your list includes the following:

- \* Choose not to have sex
- \* Use a condom when having sex
- \* Don't share needles for drugs or anything else

The list may also include:

- \* Don't do drugs or drink
- \* Get tested for HIV

Wrap-up the lesson by restating the main points and encouraging students to share the family newsletter at home.

*"I want everyone to remember that kids your age almost never get HIV. That is because the behaviors that spread HIV, like having sex and sharing needles, are not things that kids do."*

*"It is still important that we discuss HIV because it is a very serious illness, and there are important things people can do to prevent getting it. The purpose of the family newsletter is to help your families learn more about HIV, and to help start conversations between you and your parent, guardian or other trusted adult."*

*"I want to make sure you all know how to keep yourselves healthy when you get older."*

**Grade 5  
Lesson 1****HIV Overview: Immune System****Activity 3****Presentation on the Immune System****Immune System**

1. The immune system has two main parts: skin and white blood cells.
2. Skin is an important part of the immune system, because it helps to keep germs out. It works as a barrier.
3. If a person has a cut, scrape or burn on their skin, the skin doesn't work as well to keep germs out. Germs can come in through that opening, especially if there isn't a scab yet.
4. Germs can also enter a person's body through a mucous membrane – the pink, wet skin, like someone has in their mouth or eyes.
5. If germs do make it inside a person's body, there are several different types of White Blood Cells that try to fight the germs off.
6. There are two main types of germs that can make you sick: bacteria germs and virus germs. HIV is a virus.



**Grade 5  
Lesson 1****HIV Overview: Immune System****Activity 3****Presentation on the Immune System**

**Immune System Label Instructions:** Copy and cut the following quantities:

- \* 2 Virus
- \* 2 Bacteria
- \* 3 Rare Diseases
- \* 1 HIV (teacher wears this one)

**Virus**

**Bacteria**

**Rare Diseases**

**HIV**

**Grade 5  
Lesson 1****HIV Overview: Immune System****Activity 3****Presentation on the Immune System****Immune System Script Instructions:**

Copy this sheet onto paper and cut into strips. You'll need 1 set per class.

7. HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system directly, so the immune system can't fight it off. When it enters the body, it takes over some of the white blood cells so they can't sound the alarm at all. The rest of the immune system doesn't even know there is any danger.
8. After years, the immune system in a person with HIV can become so weak that it cannot fight off diseases successfully.
9. Now this person's immune system is not working right. This person can get all kinds of rare diseases that can make them very sick, especially if they do not have a doctor to help them.
10. In a healthy immune system, the body would fight off these diseases. But in a person with HIV, their immune system isn't working right, and it can't even recognize the rare diseases.
11. The good news is that HIV is really hard to get, and there are ways to keep yourself safe.

## Grade 5 Lesson 1

# HIV Overview: Immune System

### FAMILY NEWSLETTER (continued)

#### Talking With Your Child

Your child may seek reassurance that he or she is not going to get HIV. We have discussed the fact that children almost never get HIV. You may want to tell your child the following information to help him or her understand.

When children do have HIV, it is usually because they were born with it, because their mother had HIV while she was pregnant.

In the past, another other way children have gotten HIV is from blood that was contaminated with the virus. Since 1985, the blood supply in this country is very safe, and people no longer get HIV from blood transfusions in the U.S.

As your child approaches his or her teenage years, you may want to discuss the two main ways people get HIV: sharing needles and sexual intercourse without a condom.

Sexual intercourse without a condom is the main way HIV is spread. We encourage you to communicate your family values and beliefs about sexual intercourse and condoms to your child. Abstinence from sexual intercourse and injection drug use is the most effective way to prevent the spread of HIV. Condoms are highly effective for people who are having sex.

#### Answering Questions about HIV and AIDS

We have encouraged your child to ask you if he or she has more questions about HIV and AIDS. The most important thing you can do is to share your beliefs and values regarding the behaviors that spread HIV. It is okay if you do not know much about HIV. Your child will learn that information at school.

When your child comes to you with a question, you might find it helpful to keep the following points in mind as you answer him or her.

- ♦ Listen carefully to the question.
- ♦ Give a simple short answer that is appropriate for your child's age.
- ♦ Check to make sure your child

understood the answer.

- ♦ Remember that it is okay to take a "time out" to think about your answer, or to say, "I don't know but I'll try to help you find the answer."

There are many people who can help you get more information. Here are a few resources you might like to contact:

- \* Your local school
- \* Your local health department
- \* Advocates for Youth:  
[www.advocatesforyouth.org/hiv-home](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/hiv-home)

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