

**HUMAN  
RELATIONS  
MEDIA**

**The Puberty Workshop and Curriculum**

**WHAT IS PUBERTY?**

**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

As the first program of The Puberty Workshop and Curriculum begins, viewers meet hosts Damian and Alie, who introduce the program's two experts, Dr. Peter Richel and Dr. Lisa Thornton. Dr. Thornton explains that puberty is the period between childhood and adulthood when important biological changes happen. Adolescence is defined as the period when social and emotional changes happen.

The experts explain that hormones trigger the beginning of puberty in both boys and girls. These hormones come from glands in the endocrine system. Hormones send informational signals throughout the body and travel from glands to the bloodstream, where they regulate processes like growth, development, tissue function and mood.

Viewers learn the major glands: the pituitary, which controls height and growth; the thyroid, which controls metabolism and weight; the adrenal gland, which controls the release of adrenaline; and the pancreas, which regulates insulin. The hosts explain that puberty begins when the pituitary gland sends hormonal messengers to the male and female sex organs. This prompts the ovaries to produce estrogen and the testicles to produce testosterone.

The program points out that hormones control the rate of growth. Dr. Thornton tells viewers that puberty begins at different ages for different people: About half of all girls will begin puberty by fifth grade and finish around age 16, while boys usually begin around seventh grade and finish by age 18. The Tanner Scale depicts general physical development for boys and girls.

New hair is one of the major changes of puberty: Boys and girls experience hair growth or thickening on the arms, legs, armpits and genitals, plus the face, chest and back for boys. Another change is body odor caused by new chemicals in sweat. Viewers are reminded to shower or bathe daily and use antiperspirant or deodorant. The hosts tell viewers that pimples are the result of hair follicles or pores becoming clogged with oil. Young people should wash their faces with mild soap to prevent pimples.

The hosts review several other changes that are common during puberty. They include sleeping more, desire for independence, fighting with parents more often, making new friends and having new romantic interest in peers. Finally, they urge young people to talk to their parents or another trusted adult if they have questions about puberty.