

**HUMAN
RELATIONS
MEDIA**

The Puberty Workshop and Curriculum

**GIRLS AND PUBERTY
PROGRAM SUMMARY**

Alie opens the second part of The Puberty Workshop and Curriculum by asking girls what changes they have noticed. After they list some changes, Dr. Lisa Thornton reassures them that these changes are normal. One of the first noticeable changes is breast development. Breast buds can begin to grow between the ages of 7-13. Their five stages of breast development span about five years. Dr. Thornton explains that breasts are made of milk glands, ducts, connective tissue and fat. There is no muscle in the breasts, but they are supported by the muscles in the chest wall. The biological role of breasts is to produce milk to nourish a newborn baby. Viewers learn that soreness, itchiness and tenderness are common as the breasts begin to grow. It's also normal for one breast to develop more quickly than the other. Girls are advised to start wearing a bra when breast buds can be noticed through a t-shirt.

The program moves on to the female reproductive system. Viewers are introduced to the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix, vagina, endometrium, labia and clitoris. The reproductive system releases hormones, stores ova (eggs) and nourishes a fertilized ovum as it develops. The host explains that girls are born with hundreds of thousands of ova. One ovum/egg will develop each month until menopause. Each ovum contains half the DNA necessary to create another human.

Girls begin their menstrual cycles during puberty. Hormones trigger a series of changes that result in a girl getting her first period, usually about two years after the first signs of puberty. The first day of the menstrual cycle is Day 1. About 14 days later, one ovary releases an egg. This process is called ovulation. The egg travels through the fallopian tube into the uterus. The uterus, a muscular organ, is lined with a spongy tissue called the endometrium. Each month, estrogen is released to stimulate the growth of the endometrium to prepare for a possible pregnancy. If a pregnancy does not occur, the uterus contracts to expel the unneeded tissue and blood out through the vagina. This is called getting your period. Viewers are reminded that ovulation is important because an egg can be fertilized by a male sperm cell to create a pregnancy.

Alie addresses common questions about menstruation. Girls learn that it's normal for their periods to be irregular at first. The first period can come anywhere from age 9-15. Dr. Thornton advises that girls will need to use sanitary pads or tampons to absorb the menstrual flow. Hygiene is especially important during the menstrual period. Some girls get cramps before or during their periods, which can be uncomfortable but can be managed by exercise or medication.