GROWING

A Booklet for 4th Grade Males

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Have you ever thought about how your body will grow and change into an adult?

This change is something everyone goes through, males and females alike, and is called puberty.

This booklet will explain puberty for males, explain the changes you will face and hopefully answer a lot of questions.

Puberty begins when your body starts making hormones that cause your body to change. The main hormone for males is **Testosterone**. Testosterone is responsible for many changes that take place in your body. Males can go through puberty at different ages, generally between 10 – 14 years of age. Everyone's timeline is different. There is no "right" or "wrong" time to go through puberty. EVERYONE goes through it. Even though you may be feeling as though you are the only one who's body is changing, remember that every single adult that you see has gone through this change. It is a normal process and you will be just fine.

Keeping Clean



Once you start going through puberty, you will have to start taking care of your body differently. The glands in your body are becoming more active. You will learn you have sweat glands in places you never even knew you could sweat. Including your armpit, genital area, feet and even your bottom. Sweat can cause a very unpleasant odor. In order to keep your body smelling good, you need to take a shower or bath every day and thoroughly dry your entire body. After you're fresh and clean, it's a good idea to use a deodorant or anti-perspirant (that's a fancy name for sweat) – Oh! And clean clothes – especially underwear and socks (remember all the places you sweat?)

Did you know that the health of your mouth can affect the rest of your body? Everything is connected. It is important to make sure you are brushing your teeth, gums and tongue twice a day. Don't forget to floss, too. This will help keep your breath fresh and your body healthy.

Skin Changes



Another fun part of puberty? The acne! (Just kidding – it's not fun AT ALL). Your changing body and hormones will cause you to get acne (also known as zits or pimples). There is no way to avoid getting acne, but washing your face twice a day with a mild cleanser will help to keep the acne from getting out of control. If this isn't working, talk with a trusted adult about other options and possibly see your health care provider.

Physical Transformation

Your body will begin to change during puberty. Here are most of the changes you will face:

- Your **scrotum** and penis will become larger.
- You may start to develop hair under your armpits and in your pubic area, around the base of your penis.
- Your voice will deepen. You may experience voice "cracking". That's because your vocal cords are growing and changing just like the rest of you.
- You'll probably have a "growth spurt" where you grow several inches in a short time. You may feel like your all arms and legs for a while, but this won't last forever.
- Your muscles will develop, your chest will broaden, and you may gain some weight.

In addition to the changes listed, some males may notice swelling under their nipples. This is nothing to be concerned about. It is common for males to have some breast enlargement and tenderness during puberty. It is caused by the increase in your body's hormones. If you are having swelling in the chest, talk to a trusted adult and/or your health care provider. Remember – this won't last forever!

Nutrition

Eating a well-balanced diet is important no matter your age. During puberty it is especially important to make healthy choices.

Some weight gain during puberty is totally normal. Not only are you growing taller, but the shape of your body is changing, too. Your weight is a non-issue unless you are substantially overweight.

Talk to a trusted adult and/or your health care provider if you have questions/concerns regarding your weight.

5-2-1-0

Have you heard of 5-2-1-0? It's a good thing to strive towards. 5-2-1-0 stands for:

- **5** servings of fruits/vegetables a day.
- Limit our screen time to **2** hours a day.
- Get **1** hour of physical activity a day.
- Aim for **0** sugary beverages a day. If you need something besides water, try adding fruit to your water.



Exercise

Keep moving! Always keep moving! Exercise gives you more stamina and flexibility and strengthens your heart, lungs and bones! Triple whammy!

There are LOTS of options for exercise, not just team sports.

- Running
- Swimming
- Jumping Rope
- Dancing
- Roller-skating
- Speed Walking
- Bicycling
- Skiing
- Ice Skating
- Climbing (stairs, rock walls, you get the idea)



Male Reproductive Organs

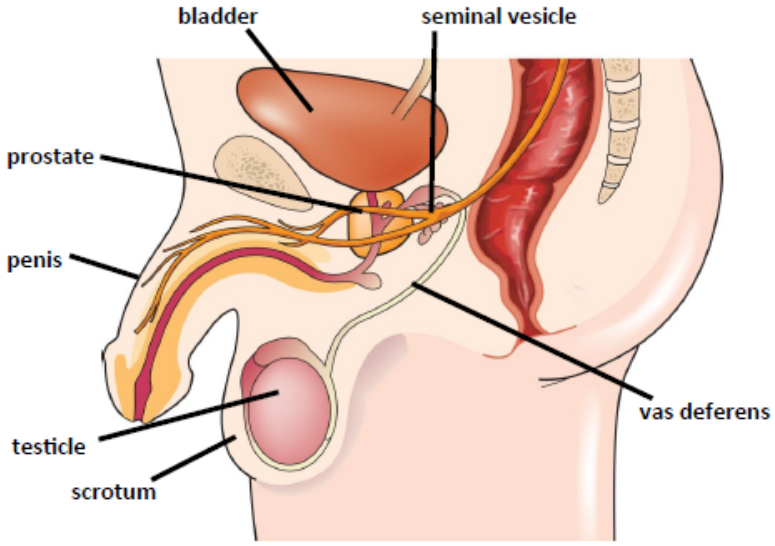
Why do I have a **penis** and this sack that has two lumps in it? What is **sperm**? Where does it come from? Do I have any internal reproductive organs or are they all on the outside?

The basic function of the male reproductive systems is to produce sperm. Testosterone (remember, the hormone in charge of all your body changes) makes the testicles start producing mature sperm for the first time. When a sperm joins with an egg from a female, the egg becomes fertilized and a baby will begin to develop in a woman's body.

Testicles/Scrotum

Males are born with a **penis** and two **testicles**. The testicles are contained in a sack called the **scrotum**. The scrotum is located

Male Reproductive System



outside the body, just underneath your penis. Sperm is made in the testicles and leave through tubes called the **vas deferens.**

Once the sperm leaves the testicles, it is mixed with a fluid produced by the prostate gland and seminal vesicle.

Prostate Gland

The **prostate gland** is an internal organ who's only job is to make fluid to mix with the sperm for fertilization. That's it! One job for the prostate!

Seminal Vesicle

There's another little organ located off the vas deferens called the **seminal vesicle**. This organ also produces and stores fluid that mixes with sperm. Once sperm has mixed with these other fluids, it is called **semen**. Semen leaves the body through the urethra (that's the hole in your penis that your urine comes from). This is called ejaculate.

Erections and "Wet Dreams"

When the hormone testosterone starts increasing, you will experience erections. An **erection** is when the blood vessels in the penis get larger and more blood enters them. This causes your penis to stiffen and harden. You have no control over this. You will get erections at awkward times and you can't control them. These occasional erections won't last forever. You won't ejaculate every time you have an erection and they aren't as noticeable as you think.

You may have heard the term "wet dreams." The medical term for this is **nocturnal emissions**. This happens when you ejaculate in your sleep without knowing. Ejaculate is the sperm/semen combination that will come out of your urethra. You may find wet semen in your pajamas or sheets when you wake up. Wet dreams happen to the majority of males going through puberty. You may feel embarrassed, but they are perfectly normal.

You will not ejaculate and urinate at the same time. It physically cannot happen. So don't worry yourself about having urine mixed with semen.

The last thing to remember is this: Popcorn kernels are all cooked in the same oil at the same temperature, but they don't all pop at the same time. Think of puberty as popcorn kernels. We all go through puberty when our bodies are ready, and it's not all the same time.

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GLOSSARY

Ejaculation (ee-JACK-you-lay-shun) – The release of sperm containing semen from the penis.

Erection (ee-RECK-shun) – The stiffening of the penis when blood fills the tissue inside.

Hormones (HOR-moans) – Chemical substances (produced by organs called glands) that regulate the growth and activity of body tissues and organs.

Nocturnal emission (nok-TUR-nal ee-MISH-un) – Also called a wet dream. Ejaculation that occurs while you are asleep.

Organ – A part of your body assigned to perform a certain function.

Penis (PEE-niss) – External male reproductive organ.

Pituitary gland (phi-Too-ih-terry) – The gland at the base of the brain which is responsible for producing hormones that regulate growth and development at puberty.

Prostate gland (PRAH-state) – Gland next to the bottom of the bladder; it forms a fluid that combines with sperm and seminal vesicle fluid to make semen.

Puberty (PEW-ber-tee) – The states of life during which human males and females become capable of reproduction.

Scrotum (SKROH-tum) – The sack of sink under the penis that holds the testicles.

Semen (SEA-men) – Also called seminal fluid, it's a white, milky liquid that carries sperm out of the penis during ejaculation.

Seminal Vesicles (SEM-in-nal VEH-si-cahls) – Area that creates a fluid that combines with sperm and prostate fluid to make sperm.

Sperm – The male reproductive cells.

Testosterone (tes-TAH-stuh-rone) – The male hormone produced in the testicles, that causes many of the changes that take place during puberty.

Urethra (you-REE-thrah) – The tube that carries urine (pee) from the bladder out of the body. Semen also exits the body through the urethra.

Vas Deferens (vas DEF-a-renz) – Tubes in which sperm is combined with other fluids to make semen.