always changing®
AND GROWING UP



boy's guide

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All the words in **teal bold type** in this booklet are defined in the glossary.

Puberty. What's happening?

This is a booklet about growing up. Now that you're growing up, you'll probably notice that your body is changing in all sorts of ways. You'll notice changes in the way you look and also in the way you feel. This is because you're going through a stage called **puberty**. This is an exciting time—it's when you start to change from being a boy to becoming a man.

Remember:
everyone starts at different ages and changes occur over time.

Puberty for boys usually starts between the ages of 10 and 17 and lasts for a few years. Everyone is different, though, and it doesn't matter when you start—your body will decide when the time is right.

You'll notice that some changes happen quickly, but others take place slowly over a few years. This guide will help you know more about puberty by:

- Letting you know what changes to expect and helping you understand them.
- Helping you prepare for what's ahead so you can feel more confident.
- Giving you helpful tips and answers to many of your puberty questions.

Just remember that puberty is a normal and healthy part of life—and it happens to everyone!



QUESTIONS ABOUT PUBERTY?

It also helps to talk about puberty. It may seem embarrassing—that's normal—but it will help you feel more relaxed and confident. Ask your mom or a trusted adult for their advice and to help answer your questions. They've experienced it, too, so they can help.

To help with the conversation, share the materials you received in class with your parent and ask them to sign below. You can start the conversation with these tips:

- **Keep it Casual**. Find a time when you typically talk to your parent. Ask him/her about when he/she was younger what he/she experienced during puberty.
- **Write it Down**. Sometimes it helps to write down your questions so you can make sure you get all the answers.
- **Be Direct**. Just tell your parent how you're feeling. Take a deep breath and let him/her know you might be embarrassed.

I, _____ have reviewed the Always Changing and Growing Up materials with my son. I understand that he may have additional questions and I agree to be a resource to help him answer his questions.

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Changes that happen to boys

Puberty starts when a gland just beneath the front of your brain—the **pituitary gland**—sends a signal for your body to start making some special chemicals. One of these chemicals—or **hormones**—is called **testosterone**, and it is produced in your **testicles**. Testosterone is responsible for many of the changes that are beginning to happen. Females have a different hormone responsible for their body changes called **estrogen**.

You'll know you are starting to go through puberty when you suddenly start to grow taller. You'll also notice that your muscles will develop more, your chest will become broader and you'll probably start to gain weight. Don't worry if your friends seem to be growing more quickly than you. Everyone's body develops at a different rate.

BOYS GO THROUGH MANY CHANGES DURING PUBERTY. THE MAIN ONES ARE:

- Your body grows taller.
- Your muscles develop more and your chest gets broader.
- Your body may sweat more and you may develop body odor.
- Your hair may become quite oily.
- Your skin may become oily and pimples may develop.
- Hair starts to grow under your arms, on your legs, in the pubic area around the base of your **penis**, on your face and sometimes on your chest.

- Your voice begins to sound deeper and may "crack" as you talk.
- Your penis and testicles become bigger and sperm begins to be produced.

"Puberty means when you get older and you start finding out more about your body and how it's changing." *—Marco, 11*

DON'T WORRY...

Some of these changes don't sound like a lot of fun—who wants body odor, oily hair and pimples? But they are all normal and can be managed with good hygiene habits. Remember, your body is your responsibility. Treat it with respect.

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR PARENTS TO ACCEPT THAT YOU'RE ALMOST AN ADULT?

Even preteens feel grown up, so you may resent the fact that your parents still see you as a child. When you disagree with them about being ready for new responsibilities, talking honestly with them about your disagreement is the only way to resolve it.

Puberty can be difficult for parents, too. Be patient as you prove you're ready for more freedom.

Body growth

Is it normal to put on weight during puberty?

Definitely. As you begin to grow to have a broader and more muscular body than a young boy, your body fat will increase. With so many changes, you may feel awkward. However, it's important you take care of yourself with good nutrition and physical activity, such as exercise. Eat a range of foods to get all the vitamins and nutrients you need. Try to eat lots of protein (like fish, meat, cheese, milk, eggs and beans). You also need complex carbohydrates (like whole wheat breads, pasta and cereals). Limit the amount of fatty and sugary foods you eat.

Help: I think I'm growing breasts.

There's no need to worry. It's normal for boys to have some swelling around the breasts and nipples. This area can also feel a bit sore. It won't last for long and will soon go away.

Why do some parts of the body mature more quickly than others?

Growth of the testicles is typically the earliest sign of puberty, but body changes can occur in a different order and still be normal. There's also a wide range of individual differences in the growth of other parts of the body—feet, hands, shoulders, legs, etc. Many different growth patterns are normal; everybody—and every body—is unique.



"My dad sat me down one day and gave me the idea of what it was all about and what was going on with my body, so that kind of helped." *—Dan, 12*

How tall will I be?

It's difficult to predict, but height is usually determined by heredity—how tall your parents and grandparents are. If both of your parents are tall, chances are you will be tall. If both of your parents are short, you may be shorter. But this is not always true—everybody is different. Occasionally, a boy will continue to grow or get another growth spurt in his late teens.

Does a lot of body hair mean you have more testosterone?

No. Testosterone is the hormone that starts your body hair growing. How much hair you have is determined by your racial/ethnic group and heredity.

VOICE CHANGES

As you mature, your voice will deepen. You may experience your voice "cracking" or changing pitch in mid-sentence. That's because your vocal cords are growing and changing just like the rest of you.

Feeling good in your skin

Of the many things your body goes through during puberty, changes in your skin are among the most noticeable. **Acne** is a natural occurrence during puberty. It starts when bacteria develops in blocked pores and turns into pimples.

Acne can't always be prevented (even by washing all the time), but by making skin care a part of your everyday routine, you can help your skin stay as clear as possible.
Talk to an adult about finding the right product for you.

3 STEPS TO BETTER SKIN

1. **Clean**—To help get rid of everyday dirt and oil on your face, wash twice daily with a gentle soap or cleanser. It can be medicated or non-medicated. Deep cleanse with a cleanser containing salicylic acid. (Look for "salicylic acid" to be listed in the active ingredients on the back of the bottle.)
2. **Prevent**—To help prevent pores from becoming clogged, use a salicylic acid product all over your face. Make sure to moisturize after each wash so your skin stays hydrated.
3. **Treat**—To help eliminate pimples quickly, use a benzoyl peroxide product to unclog pores.

ACNE DOs AND DON'Ts

- Don't squeeze any pimples—this can cause scars and may even cause more acne!
- Do use hair and other skin products with care. Look for the word "non-comedogenic" on the label. These products don't clog pores.
- Don't get too much sun. Over time, this can make your acne worse.
- Do wear the proper sunscreen products for your face and your body.
- Don't scrub skin hard. This may actually spread acne or make it worse.
- Do eat a healthy diet and make sure to get regular exercise and proper rest.



Facial hair and shaving

At some point when you notice hair on your upper lip and chin, you'll probably want to start shaving. Before you try shaving, talk to someone like your dad or a relative; ask for advice and your own razor. At first you may not need to shave very often but, eventually, as it grows faster and thicker, you may start shaving more regularly or even daily. Like most things, the more you shave, the better you get at it!

Healthy-looking hair!

HEADS UP!

Puberty may cause your hair to become oilier, thicker, coarser—even curlier or straighter. The important thing is to develop a routine for taking care of your hair and scalp, just as you do the rest of your body.

GOOD HABITS FOR HEALTHY-LOOKING HAIR

- Shampoo regularly to help remove deposits such as dirt, skin oils, and styling products.
- If you're African-American, your hair may be dry and delicate. So you only need to wash your hair 1 to 2 times a week.
- After shampooing, use a light conditioner to add moisture, control and strength.
- When your hair is wet, use a wide-tooth comb. A brush may break your hair strands.
- If your hair is cut very short, use a sunscreen on your scalp or wear a hat to protect against the harmful effects of the sun.

Smile!

DON'T FORGET YOUR TEETH

Part of having a healthy body is making sure you keep your teeth clean. To keep them strong and healthy, make sure you brush them properly every morning and every night with a good toothpaste.

Toothpaste helps fight cavities, strengthen teeth enamel and freshen breath.

For best results, brush from gum to teeth and don't forget your tongue. You should also floss daily in between your teeth. A rinse also helps reach places that brushing may have missed.



Making good decisions

In addition to the physical changes happening to your body, you'll experience other changes. You're probably starting to earn more freedom at school and at home—and probably more responsibilities, too! As a result, you'll be making more decisions on your own than when you were younger. You'll need to evaluate and make sense of all the influencing factors in your life such as friends, parents, teachers and things you see in the media and read on the Internet. At times, it can be difficult to know what to think and how to act.

I-D-E-A-L problem solving:

- **IDENTIFY** the problem
- **DESCRIBE** all the ways you might solve the problem
- **EVALUATE** all the possible solutions
- **ACT** on one of the solutions and try it out
- **LEARN** if your solution solved the problem effectively

Learning to make the right decisions for YOU is an important part of growing up. It's easy to get into situations that are challenging when you don't take the time to think about your decisions. Can you think of a time when you got into trouble because you acted "without thinking"? Remember: great decision-making skills are learned—no one is born with them!

Getting active!

Daily physical activity and exercise are great ways of keeping your body healthy—they help to make you strong and agile, and they make your heart and lungs work better, too. There are lots of things you can do, either with friends or by yourself—the secret is to find something you enjoy and keep at it. Here are some ideas for getting active.

- Go rollerblading, skating, hiking or swimming with friends.
- Walk up the stairs instead of using the elevator.
- If you go to the beach, walk or jog barefoot on the sand—it's great exercise.
- Walk, longboard, skateboard or cycle to school instead of taking the bus.
- Ride your bike around your neighborhood, either by yourself or with your friends.
- Take a younger brother or sister to the park or playground and play some ball games.
- When you're texting friends, do some exercises such as tightening then relaxing your stomach muscles. Lift weights, do leg lifts or do a wall sit. Keep connected with friends while being active!
- Find out how to get involved in physical activities at your school—perhaps join a sports team or participate in intramurals with your friends.

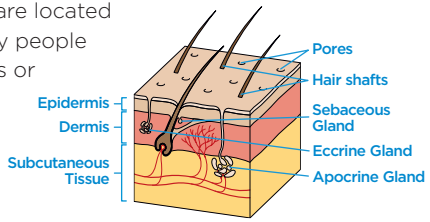
No sweat! Sponsored by Old Spice

Another body change during puberty is that your sweat glands produce more sweat (perspiration). Perspiration is normal and important—it helps your body regulate its temperature. But once you hit puberty, sweating can also cause body odor.

YOU HAVE 2 DIFFERENT KINDS OF SWEAT GLANDS

The first type—**eccrine glands**—produce perspiration that is clear and odorless. These glands start working at birth. The second type—**apocrine glands**—become active only when you start puberty. They produce a different kind of perspiration that can smell unpleasant when it comes in contact with bacteria on the skin.

A lot of apocrine glands are located under your arms, so many people use underarm deodorants or antiperspirants to control the smell.



Did you know?

- You have about 2.5 million sweat glands all over your body, except for your lips and ears.

WASH REGULARLY—ESPECIALLY AFTER EXERCISE

To stay looking and feeling your best, take a bath or shower at least once a day. Any time you get sweaty, you should bathe more often. For odor protection, and to keep smelling fresh, use a body wash like Old Spice. Then grab some clean clothes and apply a deodorant like Old Spice to help keep body odor away. If you are concerned about underarm wetness, try a deodorant/antiperspirant that fights not only odor but wetness, too. Talk to your parent about choosing the right product for you.



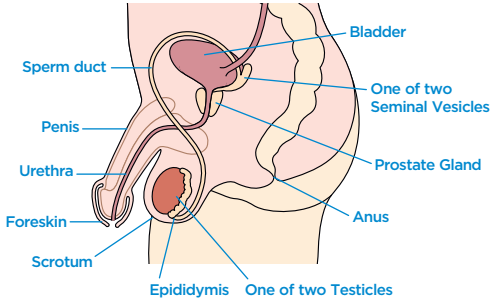
WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR DEODORANT TALK TO YOUR PARENT ABOUT CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRODUCT FOR YOU.

- **Underarm deodorants** counteract odor and help you smell good.
- **Antiperspirants** reduce perspiration and underarm wetness to help prevent odor before it starts.
- **Deodorants/antiperspirants** do the job of both a deodorant AND an antiperspirant.
- **Body sprays**, with cologne-like fragrances you can apply to your body, help you smell good everywhere. (Just remember to not overdo it: a little goes a long way!)

Your reproductive system: the way it works

The reason you have a reproductive system is because it provides the **sperm** needed to fertilize a female's egg, which can then grow to be a baby. During puberty, the levels of the hormone testosterone in your body begin to rise. This causes your penis and testicles to get bigger and the testicles to produce sperm. The testicles cannot make sperm before puberty.

Sperm are the male reproductive cells, in the same way that the eggs inside a woman are the female reproductive cells. (The sperm and the egg need to meet to make a baby.) Sperm look like tadpoles, with what appear to be a head and a tail.





Sperm are made in the testicles, which hang outside your body in a sac (scrotum) just beneath your penis. The testicles make a lot of sperm—about 1,000 sperm per second. Sperm are stored in the epididymis, which is the tube you can feel at the back of each testicle.

Sperm are damaged or killed by heat. Because of this, the penis and scrotum hang outside your body to keep the sperm cooler than your body temperature. If you become cold, you may notice that your penis and scrotum shrink. They are drawing themselves closer to your body to keep warm. When you are hot, they will hang loosely, away from your body.

Sperm are released from the testicles and epididymis and move through the sperm ducts toward the penis. Along the way, sperm mix with fluid so they can move more easily. The sperm and this fluid are now called **semen**. It is whitish and sticky. The sperm are too tiny to see—a drop of semen the size of the period at the end of this sentence would contain more than 1,000 sperm.

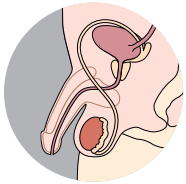
Semen leaves the penis through the **urethra**. This is the tube that runs through the middle of your penis. Urine also leaves the body through the urethra but never at the same time as semen.

ERECTIONS

When a boy or man is sexually excited, or sometimes for no reason at all, his penis becomes harder and stands away from his body. This is called an **erection**.

Do men stop having erections when they get older?

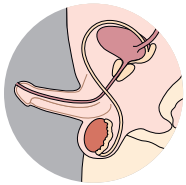
No. Healthy males of all ages, from babies to old men, can get erections. The difference is that only after puberty do males produce sperm and semen. Then they produce sperm for the rest of their lives.



Soft

Why does it get hard?

It gets hard because the blood vessels in the penis fill with blood when you get excited. Your penis doesn't have any muscles in it, which is why you can't move it around very much. There are lots of causes for erections. You can get an erection any time your penis is touched or rubbed, you have happy or exciting thoughts, or if you see someone attractive. You can get an erection for no reason at all—even when you don't want to have one—which might take you by surprise!



Hard

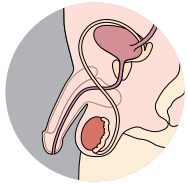
But don't worry: it's the same for all boys and men. And don't worry that someone will notice—erections are not as noticeable as you think. Try to ignore the erection, and it will go away on its own.

Does it matter what size your penis is?

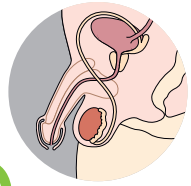
Not at all! Penises do vary in length and shape from person to person but not as much as you may think. Remember, the size of your penis has nothing to do with how manly you are or whether you can become a father.

What is circumcision?

This minor surgical procedure, usually performed soon after birth, removes all or part of the **foreskin** of the penis. A **circumcision** is not usually considered medically necessary, but often it is performed for religious or cultural reasons or because it makes it easier to keep the penis clean. To help prevent the growth of bacteria, uncircumcised boys and men should wash under the foreskin every day.



Circumcised



Uncircumcised

You might notice a ridge down the back of each testicle. This is normal. What you feel is the epididymis where the sperm is stored. There is an epididymis down the back of each testicle. If you find any other lumps, you should visit your doctor to get a full checkup.

EJACULATION

Sometimes semen spurts out of the penis. This is called an **ejaculation**. It happens when muscles at the base of the penis start to expand and contract (tighten). This pushes the semen through the urethra and out through the tip of the penis. But this won't happen every time you have an erection.

WET DREAMS

Sometimes you can ejaculate when you are asleep. This is called a nocturnal emission, more commonly known as a "**wet dream**." It happens without you knowing about it. You may notice that your pajamas or sheets feel wet or sticky when you wake up. This is nothing to worry about—most boys have wet dreams.

I have been having wet dreams for a while now. Will they ever stop?

You will experience wet dreams less frequently after your body has gone through puberty. Generally, as you grow older, you will have more control over your body. Some boys experience wet dreams regularly, while others have very few. It is nothing to worry about.





WHEN DO I NEED TO WEAR A JOCKSTRAP?

This is a personal decision. As your body changes, you may be more comfortable with an athletic supporter when you run or participate in other sports. In some sports, boys and men wear a plastic cup to protect their genitals. It can be very painful to be hit on the penis and testicles. Check with a parent, your coach or a physical education teacher if you have questions.

WHAT IS "JOCK ITCH"?

Jock itch is a skin infection caused by a fungus. Its symptoms can include a scaly, itchy rash in the genital area. To help avoid jock itch, wear clean cotton underwear and loose-fitting pants. Don't use anyone else's towels or clothes. Jock itch can be treated with antifungal medications available at the drug store without a prescription. You may want to ask a parent, coach, physical education teacher or school nurse to help you choose the right product. If the rash continues, see your doctor.

Did you know?

One of your testicles may be higher than the other. This is normal. No one is perfectly the same on both sides. Generally, the right one is slightly higher than the left one.

Want to know more about puberty?

Check out:

www.kidshealth.org
–Lots of activities, games and answers to your health questions

www.brainpop.com
–Online movies and more on puberty, health and lots of other topics

www.youtube.com/AlwaysBrand
–PG School Programs - Puberty Education videos for review

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These materials have been reviewed by the American Association for Health Education and accepted as educationally appropriate.

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