

5th Grade Growth and Development

Presented by Kelsey Rockstroh, BSN, RN

Oh My...Changes

Each year the nurses have the opportunity to speak to the 5th grade girls about growing up and how your body changes. Some of the information may make you uncomfortable or embarrassed since you're not used to talking about these things at school and that's ok.





At this stage in your life, your body and emotions are going through lots of changes-Puberty. Perspiration increases and B.O. develops, hair and skin become more oily, height and weight increase, breasts become rounder and fuller, hair begins to grow under the armpits and pubic area, and some may have emotional mood swings. The date that signals the change from childhood to womanhood is the beginning of the menstrual cycle or menstruation. Some of you may have already started to menstruate and some may not have. It usually starts between 8-13 years old.



It is important to remember
that it is different for
everyone, so you should
not compare yourself to
your classmates/friends.
Find someone to talk to
about this!

Always Changing About You!



Puberty

What is Puberty?

Menstruation

When will I start?

Every girl is different. We are all individual, which mean some of us could start at 9 and others could start at 16. There is no way of knowing when you will start. Here are some signs that your body may be preparing for you to experience your first period.

- Enlarged breasts
- Hair in pubic area will increase
- Whitish discharge coming from your vagina
- Emotions change

Several months after this, you will probably experience your first menstrual period.

Menstruation

What do I need to know?

- You have a period once a month or every 28 days.
- It usually lasts about 5 days. It varies for each person.
- Mark on the calendar
- Supplies in backpack at school
- Cramps-heat, pain reliever, encourage normal activities

The figure displays two calendar grids side-by-side for the months of March and April 2020. The days of the week are listed at the top of each grid: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat.

March 2020:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
March 2020						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2020:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
April 2020						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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In the March grid, the date 25 is marked with a star. In the April grid, the date 21 is circled.

Menstrual Protection

During your period you will bleed about 4-12 tsp of blood and tissue, which is about 1/4 to 1/2 cup.

Pads:

These are individually wrapped for cleanliness and easy to carry around at school.

They come in many different sizes, from pantliners to maxi pads.

These need to be changed about every 4-6 hours, depending on the size of your pad and the flow of your period. If not changed, you may leak or begin to smell.

There are trash receptacles in the bathroom stalls to place used materials wrapped in toilet paper.

DO NOT FLUSH!



Other Protection Options

In this program we talk about pads, but there are other ways of protection. If you are interested in those other methods, please have that discussion with your support system.



Emergency Kit

An emergency period kit is always helpful to keep in your backpack—just in case. The kit can be a small zipper bag or even a brown paper sack. In it can be a few extra pads and an extra pair of underwear. These are always helpful for those times we need them most. It is always best to be prepared!



Hygiene and Healthy Habits

Now that you are growing your body need a little extra loving care! Here are some things that are important for your body to stay balanced during these important changes:



- Bathe Daily and Wash Hair
- Clean clothes, especially underwear
- May need a bra
- Deodorant
- Get lots of sleep and exercise
- Eat well-balanced meals



In Middle School Gym...

You will change clothes for gym in middle school. You will change in the girl's locker room—no boys.

PLEASE TAKE HOME TO WASH GYM CLOTHES
AT THE END OF THE WEEK!

Exercising actually helps with your period, cramping, and just overall mood. You cannot get out of gym for being on your period.

If you need anything related to your period: Pads, underwear, or clothes—you can go to the nurse's office and they can assist you. Just let the teacher know you have a personal issue and you need to go to the nurse—they should let you go.

We are All in This Together!



Just like girls are going through changes, so are boys. It is important to know that this is all normal and we should not make fun of each other or laugh at our peers when they are going through these changes. It is all normal and a part of growing up.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions at this time, please write them on a piece of paper and place them in the air for us to grab.

All questions will be anonymous.



References

1. Cleveland Clinic. "Puberty." *Cleveland Clinic Health Library*, 26 Aug. 2024, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/puberty>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2025.
2. Nemours Children's Health / KidsHealth. "All About Periods (for Teens)." *KidsHealth*, 2025, <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/menstruation.html?ref=search>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2025.