

**Puberty is a
normal part of
growing up.
It happens to
everyone.**

Understanding Puberty

Your Body Changes

A changing body, mind and feelings are a natural part of growing up. During puberty your body grows and changes into an adult's body. The changes don't happen overnight. They happen over the course of a few years. During this time, your body is not the only thing that's changing.

As the body grows, it produces chemicals called *hormones*.

Both boys and girls experience the following kinds of changes:

- The body grows taller. (You may feel clumsy or awkward.)
- Hair and skin become oily. (Your face may begin to break out.)
- Hair and sweat glands develop under the arms. (It may be time to use a deodorant.)
- New feelings and thoughts about body changes can be confusing. (You may worry or feel embarrassed.)

Hormones are chemicals that the body makes. These chemicals are like messengers that tell the body what to do and when to do it. Hormones tell the body when it is time to begin the changes known as puberty.

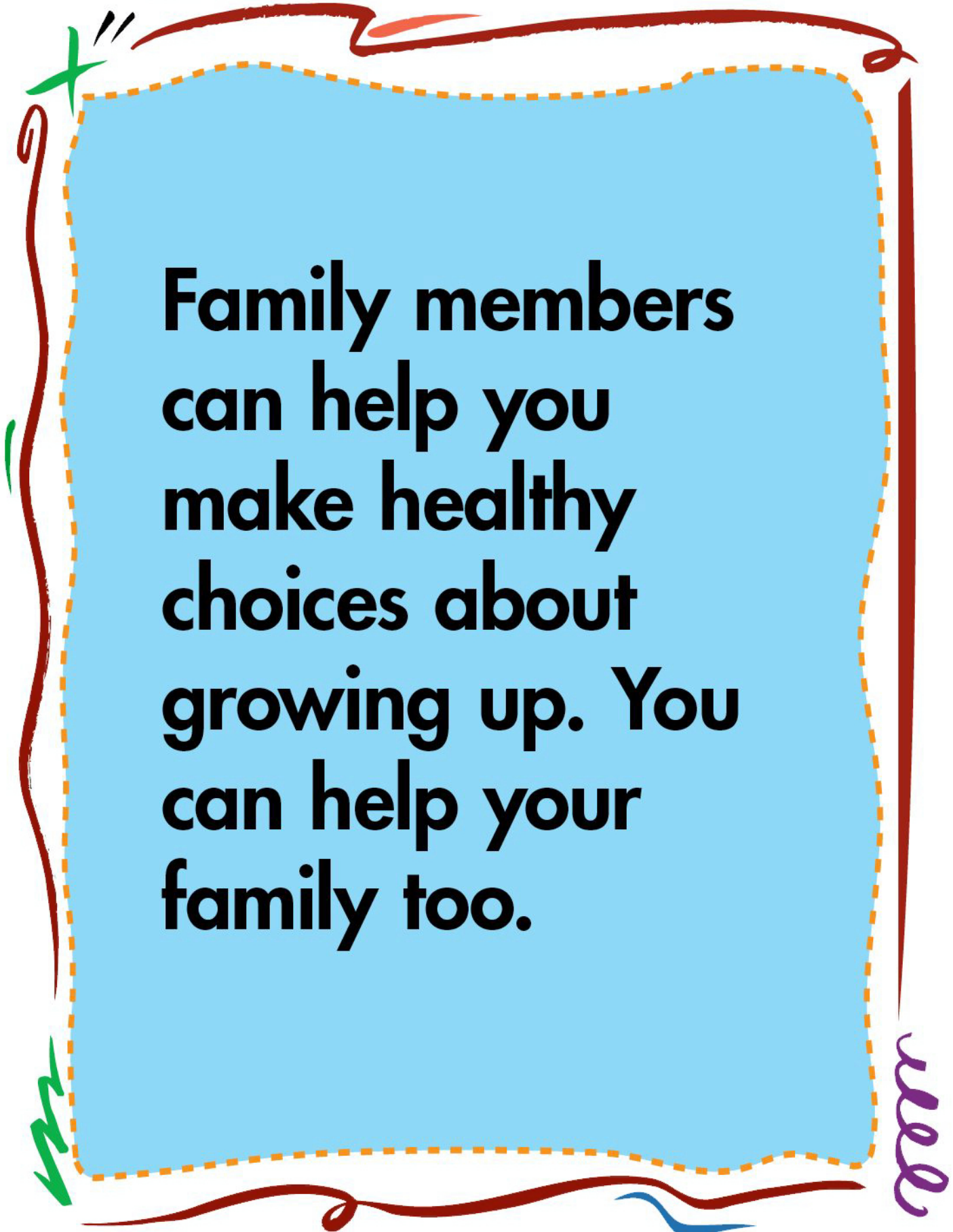
Puberty is a time when the body grows and changes on both the inside and outside. Puberty usually happens between ages 9 and 16 for girls and ages 10 and 17 for boys. Puberty is a normal part of growing up. Understanding puberty makes it easier to accept the changes.

Girls may notice changes in their body shape. Hips get wider and the waist may get smaller. Breasts develop and may feel tender and sore. Body hair begins to grow.

Boys may notice the voice beginning to more muscular. Hair begins to grow on the face and other parts of the body.

The way you see yourself and how you feel about your body changes too. Sometimes you may like the changes in your body. At other times, they may make you uneasy or unsure of yourself. It's not unusual to compare yourself to other boys or girls. It's important to remember that each person's body changes at his or her own pace.

(continued)



**Family members
can help you
make healthy
choices about
growing up. You
can help your
family too.**

Name _____

Understanding Puberty: What Would You Say?

1. I keep hearing that my body's going to start changing. What's going to happen?

2. I worry that I'm growing faster than my friends. What can I do?

3. The changes in my body embarrass me. Is there someone I can talk to?

4. My feelings seem to be up and down a lot these days. Is that normal?

5. People say that now that I'm growing up, I will have new responsibilities in my family. What does that mean?
