

Materials	Access to the internet (optional)
Learning Outcome	Identify and discuss physical changes to the body during puberty.

Description

Ask the child what they know about puberty. If they are unfamiliar with the term, explain that puberty is a process where a child's body goes through physical changes and matures into an adult body. Puberty starts when a specific hormone in the brain stimulates hormones in the body, which start the development of changes in the body. Share with the child that every body goes through changes during puberty and it is important to remember that all bodies go through these changes at different rates. People will experience varying degrees of these changes. For example, one person may have a lot of acne on their face while another person may have some acne on their back. There are also many similarities about our bodies while also being unique at the same time. Everyone has nipples but they come in many shapes, sizes, and colours!

Share the following points about puberty with the child.

- Glands in the skin and face become more active causing oily skin and acne. Acne can appear on the face, chest, back, or other areas of the body.
- A second set of molars will come in, and for some, the third set of molars will also come in (known as wisdom teeth).
- Voice will change and deepen.
- The sweat glands will change causing body odour for some.
- Hair growth will begin in the armpits, pubic area, and other parts of the body.
- Growth spurts occur in height but also for other body parts (e.g., arms, head, etc.).
- An increase in muscle and weight may occur.
- Breasts and nipples will develop and get larger.
- Vaginal fluid and menstrual cycles will begin for typical female bodies.
- Penis growth and erections will begin for typical male bodies.

Explain to the child that all of these changes are natural but if they feel concerned or have questions, they should talk to a trusted adult. Everyone has questions about their bodies and they should feel comfortable asking those questions. Share with the child that as these changes happen to their body, it is important for them to learn how to support these changes in a healthy way.

Provide the child with the example by explaining that if they get oily skin, some people enjoy their oily skin and some do not. If they do not like their oily skin, they can support it in a healthy way by washing their face with a facial cleanser and warm water and not using regular hand soap because facial skin is sensitive. Ask the child how they can support the other changes in their body in a healthy way by discussing how they can support their teeth, sweat glands/body odour, hair growth, vaginal fluid/menstrual cycles, and erections. Visit the [Hygiene Basics](#), [Feeling Fresh](#), and other pages of the [TeensHealth](#) website to find information on how to support explaining changes to the body in a healthy way.

Encourage the child to feel open about asking any questions they have about puberty. If the child is having difficulty speaking to you about their bodies, invite them to write their questions on a piece of paper or send you a text or email. Encourage them to continue to ask questions about their bodies and talk about any concerns or observations in the days, months, and years ahead.

Healthy Bodies Competencies



THINK

Students will develop cognitive skills and strategies that facilitate knowledge in regards, but not limited to: consent, boundaries, body awareness, and acceptance.



FEEL

Students will develop affective skills and strategies that facilitate the following, but are not limited to: healthy relationships, overall well-being, and personal choice.



ACT

Students will practice behaviour skills and strategies that facilitate the following, but are not limited to: personal hygiene health, accessing support resources, self-respect, and respecting the choices of others.



Reflection Questions

Reflection is important to support learning about healthy bodies. Consider asking the child the reflection questions below and discuss the answers together.

- *How do you feel about going through puberty?*
- *How can you support your friends that are feeling confused, worried, or concerned about puberty?*