ALWAYS CHANGING

GRADES 5 & 6
Puberty Education
LEADER’S GUIDE

2018-2019 Update
Dear Educator,

We are pleased to provide you with the Always Changing Leader's Guide. It is intended to provide content, lesson plans and teaching strategies to help your students understand their changing bodies, the stages of puberty and the role of personal appearance in a positive self-image.

This program is designed principally for co-ed classes in the hopes that through open and realistic discussions with students of all genders present, students have the opportunity to practice a lifetime of healthy and appropriate communication – in their relationships, at school, and, eventually, in the workplace.

Each year, the health education professionals from Ophea and Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada) conduct a complete review of the program materials to ensure they reflect the most up to date curriculum deliverables for your students. For over 20 years, Procter & Gamble Inc., in conjunction with Ophea and PHE Canada, has provided these resources at no cost to classrooms across Canada. The goal is to provide educators with a user-friendly, state of the art, puberty education program for grades 5-6 and grades 7-8.

The Always Changing resources are available online in digital form at www.ophea.net and www.phecanada.ca. In addition to the Leader's Guide, Growing #LIKEAGIRL Female Student Guide, Always Changing and Growing Up Male Student Guide and Co-ed Online Always Changing Student Guide, educators can view or download several activity sheets, pre- and post-tests and answer sheets supporting their efforts to teach this material.

In 2016-2017, a 5th lesson plan was added to this guide, “Bridging the Confidence Gap”. The #LikeAGirl global initiative inspired educators worldwide to request resources that helped over 17 million students rethink and redefine common words and phrases about gender stereotypes. This lesson helps students learn about how words can harm and damage confidence. Understanding this will help change behaviours amongst this age group through a better knowledge of vulnerabilities. This lesson can be taught in both gender-segregated classes as well as in a mixed-gender setting.

In 2017-2018, a 6th lesson plan, “Failing is More Than Okay” was added to help students overcome the fear of failure by helping them see the positive role that failure can play in their lives. In addition to gaining wisdom and strength, the experience of failure can equip students with new skills and strategies. By shifting mindsets, students can consider failure as a learning opportunity, to be embraced as they grow, learn and build confidence.

FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR, the focus has turned towards helping female students avoid missing school because they lack access to products needed to manage their periods. Research shows that nearly 1 in 7* Canadian female students are missing out on school activities, have left school early or have missed an entire school day! Along with these educational resources, you have received period pads to help ensure your students have the feminine care products they need to stay in school.

We hope you enjoy the content.

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

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*The Always Confidence & Puberty Keep Going Study, March 2018; based on Canada females 16-24 years old.
This program has been developed to help students achieve the following outcomes:

**Students will identify the connection between personal choice and healthy body systems.**

**CONFIDENCE**
- Understand how society tries to limit girls.
- Know that they can smash societies limitations and be unstoppable.

**BODY CARE**
- Identify the importance of personal hygiene practices.
- Apply personal hygiene behaviours.

**BODY KNOWLEDGE**
- Identify the factors that one can and cannot change that affect reproductive health at puberty (hormonal changes, hygiene, diet, exercise, stress).
- Students will identify the changes associated with puberty.
  - Describe the changes of puberty (e.g. physical, emotional and social).
  - Identify the male and female reproductive systems.
  - Describe the stages of the menstrual cycle and spermatogenesis.

**SELF CONCEPT**
Accept themselves as unique and special.

**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**
Take responsibility for their own choices and actions related to healthy sexuality.

**RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS**
Display behaviour that respects the sexuality of others.

**GOAL-SETTING**
Assess personal choices and behaviours in relation to their own short-term and long-term goals.

**HELP KEEP YOUR FEMALE STUDENTS IN SCHOOL**

Did you know nearly 1 in 7* Canadian female students are missing out on school activities, left school early or missed an entire school day because they lack access to period products? And what did they miss while absent from school? A review before a test? An assignment for extra credit? Auditions for the school team or school play? We’ll never know the full impact these absences have on a student’s future, but we do know that this can further affect their confidence and that is a reason for action.

That’s why we’ve included Always pads, along with your Always Changing resource materials, to ensure your students have access to the feminine care products they need to stay in school.

*The Always Confidence & Puberty Keep Going Study, March 2018; based on Canada females 16-24 years old.
Before you begin

CLASSES ON PUBERTY
Establishing ground rules for the discussion of sensitive topics will allow students to share and explore feelings and opinions in an atmosphere of trust. The leader can set the ground rules or brainstorm with the students what they should be. Ground rules usually include the following:

NO PUT DOWNS
All thoughts, feelings, ideas and opinions are accepted. No one’s thoughts and feelings are better or wrong.

NO PERSONAL QUESTIONS
People can voluntarily share but no one should be put on the spot with specific questions.

RIGHT TO PASS
Everyone has the right to NOT answer a question, including the leader.

IT’S OKAY TO GIGGLE OR BE EMBARRASSED
At first this kind of discussion may make students embarrassed. Gradually, it is expected that the giggling will stop.

CORRECT TERMS SHOULD BE USED
Students should be encouraged to ask questions using the words they know. They should also understand that they will learn correct terms and be expected to use them. Sometimes students will use explicit or slang language for shock value. They can be guided back to ‘correct terms’ by the leader.

LISTEN WHEN OTHERS ARE TALKING
Practice attentive listening.

NO TALKING ABOUT CLASS MEMBERS’ COMMENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
Everyone needs to feel that their privacy will be respected and that what they say in class won’t be repeated by someone else outside of the class or posted via social media.

DIFFERENCES WILL BE RESPECTED
Many students come from families with different points of view and beliefs about what should or shouldn’t be discussed in the classroom. It is important that they and their families wishes are respected.

PLANNING YOUR PROGRAM
School boards across Canada have many different approaches for teaching human development and sexual health. In some areas the content is precisely defined and monitored; in others, educators may draw on a variety of resources and adapt lessons based on their students’ needs. The Always Changing Program has been designed to be flexible and adaptable to your teaching plans.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Many educators feel comfortable and prepared to teach about puberty. There are individuals in the community that provide workshops and can assist with new and innovative strategies and additional information.

Contact the health and physical education program support personnel in your board of education, local public health unit or provincial or territorial health and physical education association for more information.

BEWARE OF YOUR OWN BIASES AND EXPERIENCES
Leaders are important role models and can have a powerful influence on students’ attitudes and acceptance of individual, family, cultural and ethnic differences. Think about your own experiences growing up and how they may be similar or different from those of students in the class. Be aware of your own personal biases as you assist young people in examining their own opinions and feelings about growing up.

Brought to you by always TAMPAX
The use of an anonymous question box can greatly enhance puberty education. A good way to utilize the question box is to hand out small pieces of paper to each student at the beginning of the class. Anytime a student has a question that they don’t feel comfortable asking in front of the class, they may write their question on the piece of paper. As the class is drawing to a close, collect the piece of paper from each student in a question box (even if it doesn’t have a question written on it). Therefore, the questions will remain anonymous!

When preparing to answer questions, utilize the following four-point plan to ensure that each point is represented in your answers:

**FACTS**
- Establish the facts.
- Dispel myths.
- If you don’t know, find out together!

**VALUES**
- Discuss global values of non-discrimination, mutual respect and personal privacy.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**
- Actions have consequences.
- Students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their health and wellness.

**SELF-ESTEEM**
- Value and respect self, others and the environment.

The questions students ask can be separated into four different groups:

1. **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**
   Generally, students are seeking factual information and these questions can be answered in class or answers can be sought out by the student or leader.

2. **“AM I NORMAL?” QUESTIONS**
   These questions typically focus on concerns about personal physical and emotional changes. Be certain to remain objective, validate concerns (“many young people worry about that”) and refer them to other resources for support.

3. **PERMISSION SEEKING QUESTIONS**
   May be asking permission to engage in or not engage in certain behaviours. Use universal values and refer to family values.

4. **SHOCK QUESTIONS**
   Use established ground rules to deal with inappropriate questions in the classroom.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT**
Many parents/guardians have indicated that they wish to know when puberty education classes are scheduled in their child’s school. This provides them with an opportunity to discuss the issues with their child or children.

You might choose to do any or all of the following:
- Send a letter home to parents/guardians. A sample letter is available at www.ophea.net or www.phecanada.ca.
- Host an open house for parents/guardians to preview materials.
- Hold an event for parents/guardians and their child or children to attend together.
- Create homework assignments that might be completed with parents or guardians.

Students may wish to talk to their parents/guardians about puberty but do not know how to initiate the conversation. As part of one of the lessons, you could ask the students to brainstorm a list of suggestions of how to begin discussing puberty issues with their parents (or other adults in their lives). You could also use the decision-making process to identify the best solution for this problem.

There are cultures where discussion about the human body and sexuality is considered inappropriate. Some students may be withdrawn from class when puberty is the topic. Other students may stay in class but will not be able to discuss human development and sexual health issues with their families.

**WHAT VALUES DO WE TEACH?**
Sometimes parents/guardians or others will ask what ‘values’ are taught as part of classes on puberty. The broad values conveyed in this resource are:
- Parents are the primary sexual health educators of their children. The school functions as a partner in their education.
- At this stage of development, children should have access to appropriate information about their bodies, health and life skills.
- Every person has equal dignity and worth, regardless of gender, race, religion, or culture.
- People, including children, are responsible for their own behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour.
- It is good for children to be able to talk openly and comfortably about puberty and sexuality issues with peers, parents/guardians and other adults they trust such as leaders or close relatives.
Activity Sheet Downloads

A - PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS
Outlines classroom content as well as provides web resources to help parents/guardians have the “talk” with their children.

B - TESTS

Pre-Test
Identifies general puberty knowledge before unit begins.

Post-Test
Evaluates general puberty knowledge learned from unit.

C - ACTIVITIES SHEETS

1 Introducing Terry
An introductory class activity intended to initiate student dialogue regarding the changes that take place in puberty. Terry’s gender is not revealed in this fictional grade student’s accounting of what changes they are feeling and experiencing.

2 Facts about the Female Reproductive system
Diagram labelling & Definitions activity.

3 Facts about the Male Reproductive system
Diagram labelling & Definitions activity.

4 Hidden Changes
Word Search helps students recognize that certain changes that accompany puberty are not visible.

Brought to you by always TAMPAX
5. **Myths & Facts**
   True & False questionnaire helps magnify non-reproductive body changes and personal health and hygiene needs.

6. **Taking Care of Yourself**
   Helps students identify their increasing role and choices towards their personal care.

7. **Word Scramble**
   Summarizes important facts about health and grooming.

8. **A Changing You**
   A reflection and growth worksheet.

**D - ANSWER SHEET**
Includes answers for Pre and Post-test as well as Activity Sheet #s 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

These tools support classroom activities (see lesson plans, next page) and are available at www.ophea.net and www.phecanada.ca.
Lesson One

GROWING AND CHANGING (CO-ED) OUTCOMES

• Students will identify the importance of personal hygiene practices.
• Students will understand that each person is unique and that they grow and change at different rates.

SUPPORTING ALWAYS CHANGING MATERIALS

• Leader’s Guide.
• Activity Sheet 1 Introducing Terry (Activity Sheet Download).

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE

Introduction: Indicate to students that they are going to be discussing human development and sexual health at puberty, and developing healthy attitudes about appearance and positive self-esteem. Establish ground rules (see page 2).

A Changing You: (see page 13) Have students complete as many questions as they can in class. Discuss the changes they have experienced since first grade and the changes they may be experiencing now and how they feel about themselves.

Introducing Terry: Have students read and complete Downloadable Activity Sheet 1. Ask volunteers to share their answers.

Rapid Growth Periods: Ask students what they think are the three times in their life when they grow rapidly. Discuss and outline what triggers puberty.

ENRICHMENT

Have students look through magazines and create a collage that will describe how they are changing and how children their age feel about these changes. Have volunteers share their collages.

FOR NEXT LESSON

Explain the use of the question box (see page 3 in Leader’s Guide).

Lesson Two*

THE CHANGING BODY (CO-ED) OUTCOMES

• Students will describe the changes of puberty (physical, emotional, social).
• Students will identify the male and female reproductive systems.
• Students will describe the stages of the menstrual cycle and spermatogenesis.
• Students will learn changes are ongoing and part of growing up.

SUPPORTING ALWAYS CHANGING MATERIALS

• Activity Sheet 2 Facts about the Female Reproductive system (Activity Sheet Download).
• Activity Sheet 3 Facts about the Male Reproductive system (Activity Sheet Download).
• Activity Sheet 4 Hidden Changes (Activity Sheet Download).
• Activity Sheet 5 Myths and Facts (Activity Sheet Download).

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE

Remind students about question box.

ENRICHMENT

Students are to pretend that they have fallen asleep and have awakened to find it’s five years in the future. Have them write about the changes they expect in the next five years. Share stories in class.

FOR NEXT LESSON

Distribute Activity Sheet 5 Myths and Facts about personal care (Activity Sheet Download), and ask students to complete it before the next lesson. Remind them about the question box. Provide students with the opportunity to add a question at this time.

*Note: If time permits this lesson could be spread over two sessions.
Lesson Three

TAKING CHARGE (CO-ED) OUTCOMES

• Students will identify the importance of personal hygiene practices.
• Students will identify the factors that one can and cannot change affecting reproductive health at puberty.
• Students will assess personal choices and behaviours in relation to their own short-term and long-term goals.

SUPPORTING ALWAYS CHANGING MATERIALS

• Activity Sheet 5 Myths & Facts (Activity Sheet Download).
• Activity Sheet 6 Taking Care of Yourself (Activity Sheet Download).
• Activity Sheet 7 Word Scramble (Activity Sheet Download).

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE

Skin Change: Review the changes of puberty that impact on skin care (Leader’s Guide page 19 and 20), that may result in pimples and changes in perspiration. Review the activity students have completed.

Myths and Facts about Skin Care: Review the three steps to skin care.

Goal-Setting: Introduce or review goal-setting with students. Setting goals and working to achieve them helps give direction. When you reach a goal you feel good about yourself and are confident to try other new things.

A person is more likely to reach a goal if it is based on what they know about themselves, what their interests are, and how they are behaving now. The steps to goal setting are easier to remember using the SMART steps:

S Simple
M Measureable
A Attainable
R Realistic
T Time Specific

Taking Charge: Distribute and have students complete “Taking Care of Yourself” (Activity Sheet Download). Explain that by looking at your personal attitudes, skills, and behaviours, you can identify where you are successful and areas for improvement. This will allow you to set appropriate goals. Have them complete the activity sheet. How would they like to increase their responsibility for their own personal appearance and health?

ENRICHMENT

Ask students to think about their futures and what they want their lives to be like. How could they fit a ‘life goal’ with the goal-setting exercise they just used?

FOR NEXT LESSON

Tell students that (optional) separate opportunities will be provided to review all the changes of puberty and answer some of their specific concerns and questions. Students are encouraged to attend one or both sessions that would offer the most relevant information to them. Remind them about the question box.

Lesson Four

(Optional) Two separate sessions for boys and girls.

THE CHANGING BODY OUTCOMES

• Students will describe the changes of puberty.
• Students will identify the male and female reproductive systems.
• Students will describe the stages of menstrual cycle and spermatogenesis.
• Students will identify the importance of personal hygiene practices.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

• Post-Test (Activity Sheet Download).

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE

For Girls:

• Review the changes of puberty and stages of development (pages 16-17).
• Discuss the external female genitals and hygiene (pages 16-17).
• Review the process of menstruation, choosing hygiene products and the disposal of products.
• Review other personal care habits: showering, skin care, oral care (pages 19-21).
• Review the changes of puberty for boys and discuss the similarities and differences between boys and girls (pages 14-17).
• Conclude with questions and Post-test (Activity Sheet Download).

For Boys:

• Review the changes of puberty and stages of development (pages 14-15).
• Discuss penis size, erections, wet dreams, circumcision and hygiene (page 18).
• Review other personal care habits: showering, skin care, oral care (pages 19-21).
• Review the changes of puberty for girls and review the similarities and differences between boys and girls (pages 14-17).
• Conclude with questions and Post-test (Activity Sheet Download).
Lesson Five
BRIDGING THE CONFIDENCE GAP

56% of girls lose confidence during puberty. The number one reason cited for this drop is a lack of information about what’s happening to them.¹ That’s where leaders come in. You can make all the difference by arming students with the information they need to combat the confidence gap.

**WHAT’S HOLDING HER BACK?**

Find the right keys and unlock girls’ potential to be unstoppable.

From an early age, girls receive messages from society telling them what it means to be “like a girl”: pleasing others, being liked, and being perfect. This can affect how girls approach challenge and failure. Educators from the award-winning Harpeth Hall School identified several factors holding girls back from taking on challenges they need to grow: perfectionism, sensitivity to criticism, fear of failure, and the language of self-doubt.²

Research has shown that girls are more likely to internalize negative feedback and mistakes.¹ They blame themselves and believe their ability is the reason for their mistakes. What’s worse, Dr. Susan Nolen-Hoeksema of Yale University has discovered that girls are more prone to over-thinking their decisions and their mistakes.³

All of these factors hold them back. But there’s an easy way forward. In this section, we’ll tackle all these issues and explain how you can make a positive difference in their confidence levels.

¹ Always 2014 Confidence & Puberty Survey – on line survey with 1,300 females ages 16 to 24
Lesson Five
BRIDGING THE CONFIDENCE GAP

THE CONFIDENCE GAP IN THE CLASSROOM

In the classroom, the confidence gap shows up differently than it does in girls’ social lives. Rachel Simmons and Simone Marean of Girls Leadership Institute have found that when girls lose their confidence, they’re less likely to take on challenging projects and more likely to give up or not even try.4 As her leader, you have the power to change that.

Teach girls that taking on challenges is the best way to grow.

THE POWER OF WORDS:

9 out of 10 girls believe words can harm.5 Changing your choice of words can change their worldview. When students are working hard on a task, use “process praise,” or encouragement that focuses on the process, not the outcome. Try adding these examples of process praise to your classroom vocabulary, and your students might try harder:

YET! Whenever you hear one of your students giving up or refusing to keep trying, encourage them with “Yet!” The word “yet” encourages students to focus on the process: It reminds them that they have already invested time and effort into the task, but may need a bit more time before they can complete it.

EXAMPLE: “I can’t figure out this word problem!”
“I think you mean you haven’t figured it out YET! Let’s talk about what you already know and have done — that’s how you got to this point.”6

AND. Avoid using the word “but” when you offer students feedback. By saying “and” instead, you show them that their areas of improvement are part of the process — not a barrier to it.

EXAMPLE: “You’re working hard on this, and I think one way you can improve is...”7

PRAISE EFFORT, NOT INTELLIGENCE.
Research by Stanford University professor Carol Dweck has found that telling kids how smart they are can make them fear failure, but praising effort can make them more determined to stick out a challenge.

EXAMPLE: Instead of, “You’re really smart,” say, “You worked really hard on that! I can see you had to try a few different strategies before you figured it out. Great job!”8

LIKE A GIRL. Only 19% of women had positive feelings about the phrase “like a girl.”9 Take a stand by taking action. Stop kids in your classroom from making fun of each other with gendered insults, and show them that doing something “like a girl” means doing something amazingly well!

EXAMPLE: When you hear a gendered insult, you could say, “It’s disrespectful to say that people are less capable because of their gender. And it’s also just untrue. In this classroom, we respect everyone equally for who they are, even if they are different from us. How can you say ‘like a girl’ in a way that is encouraging?”

4, 7 Simmons, Rachel, and Simone Marean. “Growth Mindset.” Telephone interview. 9 Apr. 2015.
Lesson Five
BRIDGING THE CONFIDENCE GAP

Activity
Unstoppable #LikeAGirl

Girls should be perfect
Girls aren’t strong
Girls can’t be sports newscasters

Girls can’t be brave
Girls should please the people around them
Girls can’t study science or math

LEADERS NOTES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
• Help students understand how society tries to limit girls by telling them what they should and shouldn’t be or do, and teach them that they don’t have to accept those limitations.
• Help students understand that societal limitations — even positive ones — can hold girls back and stop them from trying new things.
• Encourage students to smash their limitations and be unstoppable.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED
• Always® Unstoppable #LikeAGirl video available at www.youtube.com/alwaysbrand. Access the video through the Canada PG School Program - Puberty Education playlist.
• Student notebooks and pens or markers.

ASSESSMENT
Leader observation of students’ use of adaptive, management, or coping skills as they acquire knowledge and skills related to developing self-confidence.

MINDS-ON
Watch the Always® Unstoppable #LikeAGirl video available at www.youtube.com/alwaysbrand to familiarize yourself with the content you are about to teach. Access the video through the Canada PG School Program - Puberty Education playlist.

ACTION
Start the activity by asking students to write down a specific behaviour or trait they think they should have because of their gender (boy, girl, two-spirited, transgender, transsexual, intersex, etc.). Example, boys are tough or girls can’t run fast.

CONSOLIDATION
Are there any specific adjectives usually used to describe certain genders? How are girls typically described? How are boys typically described? Are there things that a girl is either expected, or NOT expected, to do because she is a girl? Discuss these questions with your class and identify how stereotypes can prevent students from trying new things.
Lesson Six
FAILING IS MORE THAN OK

Activity
Keep Going #LikeAGirl

Watch the Always® #LIKEAGIRL – Keep Going video in class.
www.youtube.com/AlwaysBrand
Access the video through the Canada PG School Program - Puberty Education playlist.

But guess what? Failing is more than okay, it’s what helps you grow in confidence!

LEADERS NOTES

MINDS-ON
To begin the class discussion, we recommend you share your own example of a time you failed, but didn’t give up and kept preserving through failure. Then move into the following discussion questions:

• What are some ways you have failed and didn’t give up on your goal?
• Do you think there are differences between how girls deal with failing and how boys deal with failing?
• Do you think failure might be particularly hard for girls? Why?

ACTION
Watch the Always #LikeAGirl – Keep Going video in class.

THEORY TO BE EXPLAINED TO STUDENTS:
Even though it’s something that you may not like or be afraid of, failing is okay; actually it’s more than okay. Why? Because when you persevere through failing you learn new skills and gain wisdom and strength. In fact, failing – and choosing to work through it – is critical to help you learn, grow and build your confidence.

Following the video and explanation of the theory, have students write a reflection in their notebooks answering the following questions (ensure questions are written on the board):

• Write about a time you failed recently: How did failing make you feel? What were some of your thoughts at the time?
• How did you deal with the failure? Did you keep trying, take a break or give up?

CONSOLIDATION
To close out the lesson, have girls write a letter to a younger student they love or who looks up to them about the time they experienced failing (from Action). Have them think about answering the following questions in the letter:

• Looking back on it now, would you do anything differently?
• What did you learn if you did keep trying? Or what do you think you could have learnt if you hadn’t given up?
• What words of encouragement would they share with a girl facing the same situation?

Invite 2-3 students to share their letters with the class.
Overview of Human Development and Sexual Health

Centuries of cultural and religious traditions have led us to treat puberty as everything from a reason for great celebration to a cause for shame or silence. However viewed, early adolescence is a complex time of change: emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually.

Boys and girls in the fifth and sixth grades are usually between the ages of 10 and 12 and there is enormous diversity in these children. Not only do most girls enter puberty about two years earlier than most boys but individual rates of growth vary widely as well. The timing of development at puberty is influenced by heredity, nutrition throughout childhood, and physical activity levels.

LIFE’S THREE PERIODS OF RAPID GROWTH

From conception to birth the human fetus grows from one cell (fertilized ovum) to 26 trillion cells. This is the most rapid growth period.

In the first year an infant usually triples its birth weight, the second most rapid growth period. Asking students to imagine what they would look like if they tripled their weight in one year puts everything in perspective.

Puberty is the last rapid growth period in life. It is the slowest of the three and is different than the others because it includes reproductive changes as well as a growth spurt.

IT’S ALL ABOUT CHANGE

Growing up involves change. It may be helpful to put these puberty changes in perspective by asking students to think about the changes we experience everyday, every year. What is the difference between those changes and the ones that come with puberty? As adults what major changes occur?

Students between 10 and 12 years notice obvious differences in development in their peer group and worry about changes happening too quickly or too slowly. Often they are sensitive to popular commercialized messages about ‘ideal’ body shape and size. Given the mixed messages and pressures facing these children, this resource can provide a welcome forum for addressing questions, concerns and worries about growing up.

Puberty for many children is a time of emotional intensity. With assistance they can learn ways to cope with sudden mood changes. One educator has said that it is common for pubescent young people to get the “mads, sads and glads.”

Mood swings triggered by fluctuating hormone levels can be puzzling for young people and their families. Classroom sessions that focus on ways to cope can be helpful to students and parents/guardians.

Emotional Changes at Puberty

The wide emotional swings that everyone experiences during puberty are caused by hormones: testosterone (boys), as well as progesterone and estrogen (girls). As an educator, helping them know what to expect can lessen the ups and downs of growing up. Explain and emphasize the following changes:

• Mood swings. Normally caused by changing hormone levels, mood swings are part of puberty for everyone. For girls that have started menstruation, this may be most noticeable around day 15 of their cycle.

• Change in self-confidence. A Changing body - whether it’s ahead, behind or on pace with their peers - can be a source of concern for many young/pre-teens. An increase in feelings of awkwardness and embarrassment are common. Stressing that it’s good to be an individual, physically and emotionally, can help young/pre-teens cope with all these changes.

• Emotional instability. Young/pre-teens often become more emotional and react more strongly than they did when they were younger, regardless of whether it’s a school or peer-related issue. Conversation is the key to helping young/pre-teens learn self control.

• Need for independence. As a natural part of puberty, young/pre-teens will begin to question boundaries set by their parents/guardians and other authority figures in their lives, including you. Finding ways to offer young/pre-teens more responsibility while maintaining firm boundaries is an ideal way to help them grow without stepping out of bounds.

Remember, the more young/pre-teens understand what’s happening physically and emotionally, the more they can recognize and cope with the upcoming changes in all aspects of their lives.

Personal and Social Skill Building

Over the last decade, evaluations of health programs in schools show that effective programs have similar key elements. These programs use peers as leaders, actively involve parents and guardians, and support students’ personal and social skill development. Most importantly, they include personal and social skill building activities. Teaching these skills as part of a puberty education unit is a positive approach to healthy behaviour and will provide students with the ability to be in control and take more responsibility for their own health and wellness.

The four broad personal and social skills that are integrated into this resource are:

• Decision-Making – assist students to solve problems that may arise in relation to the changes at puberty and to take responsibility for their own choices and actions.

• Communication – assist students to express thoughts, feelings and listen actively to others.

• Goal-Setting – assist students to look ahead and consider the steps to healthy decisions and goals.

• Self-Awareness – assist students to increase awareness of their unique and positive qualities.
A Changing You
Name: ________________________________

Me Then

THINGS I DID WELL THEN:
(i.e. draw, swim)
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

FAVOURITE THINGS I DID IN GRADE 1:
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

PEOPLE IMPORTANT TO ME THEN:
(i.e. friends, parents/guardians)
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

DID YOU KNOW...
that there are three times in your life when you grow rapidly? Can you guess what they are?
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Also available as Activity Sheet 8 (Activity Sheet Download).

Me Now

THINGS I DO WELL NOW:
(i.e. basketball, sing, cook)
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

ONE THING I AM PROUD OF:
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

MY INTERESTS:
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO ME NOW:
(i.e. parent/guardian, leader, friend)
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

THINGS I WANT TO WORK ON:
(i.e. a new sport, math, painting)
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

THINGS I LIKE BEST ABOUT MYSELF:
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
Physical Changes at Puberty for Males

STAGES OF MALE PUBERTY
The male stages of development are typically described by the five stages of genital and pubic hair growth, along with other signs of male maturation: the deepening of the voice, the growth spurt, muscle development and the growth of facial and body hair.

It is important to emphasize that each boy’s progression through the stages will be slightly different according to his own body’s timetable, and boys usually move through the stages of puberty one or two years later than girls.

IS MY PENIS NORMAL?
This question comes up often for adolescent males. Each one is unique - thick, thin, long, short, straight or curvy.

SOME FICTIONAL BELIEFS
Tall men, with husky builds have bigger penises than short and skinny men. False
Men with big thumbs, big hands, big feet have larger penises than average. False
Some racial or ethnic groups have larger penises than other racial, ethnic groups. False
Men with larger penises have more sex drive than men with smaller penises. False

Male Stages of Development

Stage One:
Up to ages 9 to 13
• Childhood stage; no visible signs of pubertal development.

Stage Two:
May begin ages 9 to 15
• Testicles and scrotum grow larger.
• Fine, straight hairs start growing at the base of the penis.

Stage Three:
May begin ages 11 to 16
• Testicles and scrotum continue to grow.
• Penis grows larger.
• Pubic hair becomes darker, thicker and curlier.
• Vocal cords increase in size, causing voice to deepen.
• Height and weight may start to increase noticeably.

Stage Four:
May begin ages 12 to 17
• Growth spurt continues.
• Shoulders begin to broaden and physique becomes more muscular.
• Penis grows in width as well as length.
• Pubic hair coarsens and takes on a triangular shape.
• Underarm hair appears.
• Traces of hair may appear on upper lip and chin.
• Testicles start to produce sperm; ejaculation occurs for the first time.

Stage Five:
May begin ages 14 to 18
• Adult stage; overall look is that of a young man.
• Genitals and pubic hair have an adult appearance.
• Growth spurt slows down.
• Facial hair growth becomes heavier.
• Body hair growth, especially on the chest, may continue into the twenties.
Overview of the Male Reproductive System

Understanding the reproductive system is as important as understanding any other organ system of the body. Encourage students to learn this system and understand the function of each part. By becoming familiar with male anatomy, students of all genders can better comprehend changes to male reproductive system. Ensure that students learn the correct terminology as well. Review pronunciation.

Begin by explaining that the main purpose of the male reproductive system is to produce sperm – the male reproductive cells. During puberty, the hormone testosterone enables the testicles to start producing mature sperm for the first time. When a sperm reaches an egg inside a woman and fertilization takes place, the woman becomes pregnant.

Sperm is combined with other fluid in the vas deferens to make seminal fluid, which is called semen. To explain how this happens and how semen leaves the body through ejaculation, you may want to trace the path of the sperm. Start from the testicles, then through the vas deferens, seminal vesicles, prostate gland and urethra. Define erection and ejaculation. Be sure to explain that urine also leaves the body through the urethra, but never at the same time as semen.

PERSONAL CONCERNS FOR BOYS

Issues for discussion in separate sessions

Circumcision: This is the removal of the foreskin covering the head of the penis, usually when the boy is an infant. It is done for religious, cultural or hygienic reasons.

Cleanliness: Penis and testicles should be washed and carefully dried daily. If uncircumcised, pull foreskin back to wash away smegma. Drying carefully is important to avoid chapping. Chapping can be uncomfortable and is sometimes called jock itch. It can be treated by applying corn starch or over the counter medications.

Athletic Supporters: Also called jock straps. Athletic supports are worn to support the penis and testicles during physical activity. For contact sports you can purchase a plastic or fiberglass ‘cup’ to insert or attach to the jock strap to give additional protection against injury.

Amazing Sperm facts

• During puberty, a boy starts to make sperm in the testes and will continue to make new sperm every day, about 400 million sperm a day.
• A new sperm takes four to six weeks to mature. During that time it travels through long coiled tubes in the testicles.
• The testicles have to be slightly cooler than the normal body temperature to produce healthy sperm. When it’s cold outside, the scrotum pulls the testicles closer to the body to warm them.
• When it is warm the scrotum hangs lower so they stay cool.
• Once sperm are mature, they travel up through the 35-45 cm sperm duct or vas deferens and over the bladder. They are then stored until they are ejaculated.
• A normal ejaculation contains 150 – 500 million sperm.
• If a male has only one testis (born that way or sometimes an accident or cancer causes the loss) the remaining testis doubles its sperm production.

DIAGRAM OF MALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

A - vas deferens (sperm duct)  F - one of two testicles
B - urethra  G - epididymis
C - penis  H - prostate gland
D - foreskin  I - one of two seminal vesicles
E - scrotum  J - bladder

Uncircumcised penis
STAGES OF FEMALE PUBERTY
The female stages of development are typically described by the five stages of breast development and pubic hair growth along with other signs of female maturation: the growth spurt, the onset of vaginal discharge and start of menstruation. The drawing below describes these five stages with average age ranges.
It is important to emphasize that each girl’s progression through the stages will be slightly different according to her own body's timetable.

1. **Stage One:**
   - Up to ages 8 to 12
   - Childhood stage; no visible signs of pubertal development.

2. **Stage Two:**
   - May begin ages 8 to 14
   - Height and weight increase rapidly.
   - Breast buds appear; nipples become raised and this area may be tender.
   - Fine, straight hairs start growing close to the labia.

3. **Stage Three:**
   - May begin ages 9 to 15
   - Height continues to increase.
   - Breasts become rounder and fuller.
   - Pubic hair becomes darker, thicker and curlier.
   - Hips may start to widen in relation to waist, giving a softer, more rounded shape.
   - Vagina begins secreting a clear, whitish fluid called vaginal discharge.
   - For some girls, ovulation and menstruation begin late in this stage.

4. **Stage Four:**
   - May begin ages 10 to 16
   - Underarm hair appears.
   - The nipple and the dark area around it (areola) may stick out from the rest of the breast.
   - Pubic hair starts to form a triangular patch in front and around sides of the genital area.
   - For many girls, ovulation and menstruation begin during this stage.

5. **Stage Five:**
   - May begin ages 12 to 19
   - Adult stage; overall look is that of a young woman.
   - Areola rejoins breast contour and breast development is complete.
   - Pubic hair forms a thick, curly, triangular patch.
   - Adult height is probably reached.
   - Ovulation and menstruation occur regularly.

### BREASTS
The sequence of early changes for girls involves growth spurts and breast buds, so many questions girls have involve breast changes.

- It takes three to five years for breasts to grow to their full size.
- Breasts come in different sizes and shapes. Nipples may differ in colour and shape.
- Some girls may have one breast that is bigger than the other and nipples that look different. Sometimes developing breasts may make a girl self-conscious.
- Breasts begin to enlarge because milk producing glands, cushioned by layers of fat tissue, are forming under the nipple.
- Women with large breasts have no additional milk glands, just extra fat tissue. They do not produce more milk than women with small breasts.

### Female Stages of Development

**Stage One:**
- Up to ages 8 to 12
- Childhood stage; no visible signs of pubertal development.

**Stage Two:**
- May begin ages 8 to 14
- Height and weight increase rapidly.
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Brought to you by always TAMPAX
Overview of the Female Reproductive System

Understanding the reproductive system is as important as understanding any other organ system of the body. Encourage students to learn this system and understand the function of each part. By becoming familiar with the female anatomy, students of all genders can better grasp what happens during the menstrual cycle. Ensure that students learn the correct terminology as well. Review pronunciation. Help students understand the approximate location, size and shape of each organ.

PERSONAL CONCERNS FOR GIRLS
Issues for discussion in separate sessions

The whole area of soft skin between a females legs is called the **vulva**. The **labia** are two sets of soft folds of skin inside the **vulva**. The **clitoris** is a small mound of skin above the **urethra** and is very sensitive.

Unlike the male reproductive organs that are easily seen, female external genitalia may be more challenging to conceptualize. An easy way of explaining the female external genitalia is to say that from front to back there are three openings in a girl’s body:

**Urethra**: A very small opening, the tube that drains urine from the body.

**Vaginal opening**: The passageway to the **uterus**, opening through which the menstrual blood flows. Sometimes the vaginal opening is covered with the **hymen**, a thin piece of skin. The **hymen** looks slightly different on each girl and some girls are born without one.

**Anus**: A small opening through which bowel movements leave the body.

Washing the entire **vulva** often is important as it is an area where bacteria grow and cause odour. White **smegma** develops in the folds of the **labia**. It is best not to use perfumed soaps or powders in the genital area, to avoid irritation.

Amazing Ovum facts (plural ova)

- A girl is born with hundreds of thousands of ova resting deep inside her ovaries.
- The ovum is the largest human cell, and yet is no bigger than the tip of a pencil lead.
- Ova carry one half the codes or genes that determine human life, while sperm carries the other half.
- It is believed that the ovaries take turns ovulating from one month to the next - one month the left ovary, and the next month the right ovary.
- Each ovum is encased in a lining sac called a follicle. At puberty some of the follicles start to mature and move toward the surface of the ovary.
- A mature follicle forms a tiny blister-like bubble on the surface of the ovary. At ovulation the ovum pops out and is pulled into the fallopian tubes.

**Diagram of Female Reproductive Organs**

- A - fallopian tubes (2)
- B - ovum (eggs)
- C - uterus
- D - endometrium
- E - ovaries (2)
- F - cervix
- G - vagina
- H - ova
BRAS

• Questions related to breast development and bras may be an uncomfortable subject for some students to discuss at home.
• Bra sizes are measured by underbust/band size (number) and cup size (letter). For instance, a person who wears a size 34A bra has a 34 inch underbust and A cup size breasts.
• Some adolescents may choose to wear ‘training bras’ during early breast development for some support. Note, these bras do not change the process or pace of breast development.

BRA MEASURING GUIDE

1 Measure around your chest, just below your breasts. Add 5 inches if it is an odd number; add 4 inches if it is an even number. This is your bra measurement.
2 To find out what cup you need, measure again around your chest, over the fullest part of your breasts.
   If the two numbers are the same, you need an AA-cup.
   If the two numbers differ by 1 inch, you need an A-cup.
   If the two numbers differ by 2 inches, you need a B-cup.
   If the two numbers differ by 3 inches, you need a C-cup.
   If the two numbers differ by 4 inches, you need a D-cup.

Example:
Natalie’s first measurement is 27 inches. Adding 5 inches gives 32 inches. This is her bra measurement.
Natalie’s second measurement is 33 inches.
The difference in the two numbers is 1 inch, so she needs an A-cup.

Additional Male Facts

CHANGES IN PENIS SIZE DURING PUBERTY

The penis grows in length and width during puberty in slow and gradual stages. When adolescent boys understand these stages of growth, some of their concerns may be lessened. Testicles and scrotum enlarge first, changes in the penis happen later and only towards the end of puberty does the penis attain adult size.

Areas of frequent concern to boys are wet dreams and erections. Let students know that these concerns are common during puberty. Wet dreams, also called nocturnal emissions, happen to about one third of boys. Sometimes a boy can ejaculate when he is asleep. This is called a wet dream. It happens without him knowing about it – he may notice that his pyjamas or sheets feel a bit wet or sticky when he wakes up. Wet dreams can be embarrassing, especially if boys do not understand why they happen.

Involuntary erections are also common during puberty. An involuntary erection occurs for no apparent reason. A boy doesn’t have to be thinking about sex or anything in particular. This can happen without warning as a boy reaches puberty. But it’s not always noticeable, and it will go away as the muscles at the base of the penis relax and allow the blood to leave the penis so that it gets smaller and softer again. You can offer boys suggestions of how to deal with erections that happen at awkward times (i.e. sit down, put hands in pockets, wear baggy clothes).
Helping Skin Stay Clear

The appearance of blemishes and pimples during puberty happens to 8 out of 10 young people. Acne is a more severe case of pimples. It’s one more worry that affects how people feel about themselves. Yet, by understanding the causes of acne and the appropriate steps to control skin breakouts, young/pre-teens can gain confidence in meeting this challenge.

At puberty, changes in the skin that take place are caused by body hormones. The sebaceous or oil glands in skin become enlarged and more active, producing excess amounts of an oily substance called sebum. Oil glands are in the skin throughout the body, but there are more of them on the face (especially across the forehead, and down the nose and chin, often called the T-zone), neck, shoulders, upper chest and back – the areas where pimples and acne are most likely to appear.

Skin problems begin beneath the surface of the skin in the underlying dermis. The dermis contains nerve endings, sweat glands, sebaceous glands and hair follicles.

Normally, oil produced by sebaceous glands flows up through the hair follicles or pores to the skin’s surface. When the amount of oil increases, it can combine with dead skin cells within the follicles to clog pores. This blockage, also called a plug, allows a pimple to develop.

Plugs exposed to air appear as blackheads. It’s not dirt that make blackheads dark, it’s when melanin (the same substance that gives skin it’s colour) is exposed to air. White-heads are closed plugs. They are the more serious of the two because they can become inflamed.

Anyone who has ever had a pimple appear just at the wrong time knows how frustrating it is that it can’t be banished overnight. Young/pre-teens may be short on patience, but learning to take care of skin over time is the best defense against acne. No skin care routine can deliver results overnight. But by following a Clean, Prevent and Treat routine, young/pre-teens can achieve clearer skin and learn to better manage acne breakouts.

CLEAN

• To help get rid of everyday dirt and oil on their face, young/pre-teens should wash their face gently, twice a day, with soap or cleansers, which can be medicated or non-medicated. Scrubbing hard only aggravates breakouts. Young/pre-teens who wear makeup or who have blackheads may benefit from deep cleansing with a special cleanser containing salicylic acid. This helps prevent clogged pores that can lead to pimples and acne.

PREVENT

• To help prevent pores from becoming clogged, use a salicylic acid product all over the face two times a day to help prevent pimples.
• Use moisturizer and drink water to keep skin hydrated. Dry skin forces the body to produce more oil which can lead to more acne.

TREAT

• Despite young/pre-teens’ best preventative efforts, some stubborn pimples may still form. To help get rid of existing pimples, young/pre-teens should use a medicated treatment containing benzoyl peroxide. It works to unclog pores and helps eliminate pimples fast. There is no stronger acne fighting medication available without a prescription.
• Use products correctly. Young/pre-teens should follow product directions carefully. Individual routines may need to be adjusted to take into account individual sensitivities. Care should be taken not to over dry or over treat skin. For example, some young/pre-teens may be sensitive to a combination of salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide. If skin should become dry, red, itchy or flaky, treatment frequency should be reduced.
• Do not squeeze, pick or pop! This can cause inflammation to spread under the skin.
• A young/pre-teen who has serious acne or whose skin does not improve after a month of regular treatment should be encouraged to see a family physician or dermatologist. Dermatologists can usually treat even the most serious cases of acne.
Myths and Facts about Skin Care

Young/pre-teens can be the carriers for unusual misinformation about skin care. They may even hear some of it from well-meaning adults. Help your students understand the truth about the causes of blemishes and appropriate skin care with this myths and facts discussion.

• **My diet may worsen acne.**  
  **Fact.** While diet is not the cause of acne, certain foods (e.g., dairy, carbohydrate-rich foods) may intensify the problem.

• **Scrubbing skin hard will prevent breakouts.**  
  **Myth.** In fact, hard scrubbing can actually aggravate the acne condition. Also, harsh soaps or other products can make skin problems worse and lead to dry, flaking skin.

• **Environmental conditions can increase skin problems.**  
  **Fact.** People who live in hot, humid climates can have more problems.

• **Skin irritation can cause acne.**  
  **Fact.** When skin is rubbed by backpack straps, athletic gear, or other items that cause undue friction, a type of acne known as acne mechanic can result. Hats, headbands or visors can also contribute to skin problems.

• **The sun is good for acne.**  
  **Myth.** In fact, the sun can actually aggravate acne. The sun also speeds aging of skin and can cause skin cancer. All students should be encouraged to use sunscreens and in more extreme situations, consult a physician.

• **Stress can contribute to skin problems.**  
  **Fact.** Although stress does not directly cause acne, it may aggravate it. When young/pre-teens are under pressure, or are anxious, hormonal activity may increase, setting off an acne cycle.

Oral Hygiene

Students should be reminded that overall oral hygiene is very important at all ages. While continuing to try to prevent cavities, they are probably beginning to face new challenges such as maintaining fresh breath and dealing with braces. These pointers can help keep students on the track to proper oral care and good oral hygiene.

• **Brush teeth and tongue at least twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.** Brushing removes plaque and reduces the amount of bacteria in the mouth. Bacteria in the mouth multiply quickly. When teeth and gums aren’t cleaned regularly, the volume of bacteria in the mouth increase. Students with braces should pay special attention to cleaning their teeth. Cleaning that is not thorough allows food to collect around wires or plastic, causing splotched teeth or tooth decay.

• **Clean between teeth with dental floss** at least once a day to remove food and break up bacteria between teeth.

• **Use mouthwash** to provide additional help in controlling bad breath.

• **Visit a dentist at least twice a year** for a check-up and professional cleaning to remove plaque from below the gums, even if they have been brushed and flossed regularly. Students should be reminded that tobacco and caffeine drinks can stain teeth among other negative health effects.

• **Avoid sugary or starchy foods.** Although students may snack on foods containing sugars or starches, these kinds of foods increase the production of acids that attack tooth enamel. Encourage them to consider alternatives like plain popcorn or raw vegetables as they don’t produce acid and offer other health benefits.
Don’t Sweat it!

FACTS ABOUT STAYING DRY
Sometimes young/pre-teens don’t realize they’ve reached a stage where increased perspiration and body odour can occur. It can be very embarrassing for a young person to find out from others they need to pay closer attention to their personal hygiene. Making young/pre-teens aware they should bathe daily and use deodorant or antiperspirant can help them avoid this embarrassment.

PERSPIRATION
Perspiration is normal. Perspiration is a complex fluid composed of water, salt, proteins and other nutrients. Perspiring is how the body regulates its temperature. Therefore, it is important not to stop all of the body’s sweat because as perspiration evaporates from the skin’s surface, it cools the body.

YOUNG/PRE-TEENS ARE NOT ALONE
Throughout recorded history people have been trying to cover up or mask underarm odour. In ancient Egyptian times perfumes were used to cover up underarm odour. French perfumes were developed at the end of the 1600’s to cover up odour. The first commercial deodorant was available in the late 1800’s. In 1902, the first product that could be called an antiperspirant and deodorant was developed. It had the ability to fight both wetness and odour. Although it was effective, its major drawbacks included irritating the skin, being very acidic and eating through clothes. The methods, formulations, scents and effectiveness have changed over time, but their main focus has always been to help people stay dry and smell their best.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE PERSPIRE
Perspiration is produced by two types of sweat glands, the eccrine and apocrine glands. The eccrine glands are located all over the body, and the perspiration they produce is clear and odourless. Eccrine glands secrete mainly salt water.

The apocrine glands are located primarily under the arms and in the genital area. They become active at the onset of puberty and are associated with the growth of body hair and the other physical changes of adolescence. When the apocrine glands are stimulated, especially by emotions like stress, nervousness and excitement, the glands produce a milky-looking perspiration. As the sweat comes into contact with bacteria on the skin, the result is body odour. Therefore, young/pre-teens, like adults, need to start a regular personal hygiene routine.

CONTROLLING BODY ODOUR
Daily Bathing – The first step in controlling perspiration odour is bathing regularly with deodorant bath soap or body wash and water. A daily bath or shower removes dirt and oil from the skin and reduces the bacteria that can lead to odour. Taking showers after intense or vigorous physical activity can also help young/pre-teens stay fresh and dry. Clothes also absorb body odour. So it’s important for young/pre-teens to understand they should put on clean clothes and undergarments after bathing.

Deodorants/Antiperspirants – The second step is using either a deodorant or antiperspirant in addition to regular bathing. A deodorant counteracts odour. It contains ingredients that inhibit the growth of odour-forming bacteria and also helps neutralize or mask odour. Deodorants have no effect on the amount of perspiration secreted. An antiperspirant/deodorant helps control odour and wetness by actually restricting the flow of perspiration from under the arms as well as counteracting odour. The best time to use either of these products is immediately after bathing, when skin is clean. Young/pre-teens should select a deodorant or antiperspirant that is right for them, based on levels of effectiveness and how it feels on the skin. Generally, the most effective products are, in order: soft solid, solid, roll-on, aerosol and clear gels.
Explaining Menstruation

Begin by explaining that menstruation is part of the female reproductive process just as sperm production is part of the male reproductive process. For convenience, a 28 day cycle and a 5-day menstrual flow is used for explanation:

**DAYS 1 – 5**
During this time, when fertilization has not occurred, there is a discharge or sloughing off of the uterus lining. This menstrual flow consists of blood, mucus and other tissues.

**DAYS 6 – 13**
One ovum begins to develop inside a sac or follicle in an ovary. The lining of the uterus grows thicker in preparation for a fertilized ovum. The follicle with the ripe ovum will move towards the surface of the ovary.

**DAY 14**
The ripe ovum breaks away from the follicle and ovary. It enters the fallopian tube where fertilization can take place. If fertilization does not take place the ovum will disintegrate in 24 to 48 hours.

**DAYS 15 – 28**
If there is no fertilization, the lining of the uterus is not needed and it begins to break down. On about the 28th day, it will leave the uterus as menstrual flow and a new menstrual cycle begins. The length of time between each menstrual period differs for each individual. For some, especially those who have just begun to menstruate, have an irregular number of days between periods. Usually, but not always, the body settles into a regular pattern after a few years. Menstruation generally lasts from three to seven days. The total amount of menstrual flow can be from 2 tablespoons to 1/2 cup. It often seems like more. Menstrual discharge starts as a reddish fluid, then usually becomes brighter red. As menstruation finishes it changes to darker brownish colour.

Women who are pregnant do not menstruate. Menstruation generally continues until a woman is between 40 to 60 years old. The end of menstruation is called menopause.

**MENSTRUAL MYTHS**
Have a shower rather than bathe during menstruation. False
Avoid strenuous exercise (like aerobics, jogging, horseback riding) while menstruating. False
Drinking cold drinks during menstruation will make the flow heavier. False
Eating cold food during your period will give you cramps. False
A women can’t get pregnant during her period. False
Tampons are unsafe for young women. False
Others can tell by looking at you when you are menstruating. False
It’s in the Stars

YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE
Using ⚪️, mark the days on which you have your period each month. Use ⚪️, ⚪️️ or ⚪️️️ to show the level of flow for each day.

Count the days from the first ⚪️ of one period to the first ⚪️ of the next. This is the length of your menstrual cycle. Try to work out when your next period will start. Check to see if you were right!

Remember that your periods can take 2 years or more to settle into a regular pattern.
Choosing Hygiene Products

Research reveals most girls rely on their mothers for advice for choosing products when their period begins. However, not all students have mothers or someone they feel comfortable talking with. As an educator, you can play a role in helping students understand the range of products available that will fit their needs.

Primary concerns at this age are: avoiding accidents, avoiding a wet feeling and using protection that doesn’t show.

Feminine hygiene products are primarily designed to absorb menstrual flow. There are external protection products that are placed in their underwear (e.g. Always® pads and pantyliners) or internal protection products that are inserted vaginally (e.g. Tampax® tampons). It might be helpful to talk about these products as a system; pads for the beginning of the period when flow might be the heaviest, all the way to pantyliners for very light days prior to and following menstruation.

Unlike other feminine hygiene products, pantyliners can be used throughout the month to help keep underwear clean and fresh from normal, everyday daily discharge.

A demonstration of pads of varying thickness and tampons of different absorbencies can be enlightening. Also discuss about how often to change pads (three to four hours), how to dispose of pads (never in the toilet) and how often to change tampons (four to eight hours). Pads and tampons may be wrapped in toilet paper and placed in wastepaper basket. Plastic applicators must be disposed of in a wastepaper basket or disposal bin.

Some facts and ideas you may wish to discuss with students:
- Ultra thin pads give effective protection with less bulk than a thick pad.
- Pads with wings/tabs offer more secure protection because they wrap around the sides of panties to help hold the pad in place.
- Stress that daily discharge is normal and not something they should feel embarrassed about.
- Pantyliners can provide reassurance when a girl thinks her period is coming (especially when they are new to their cycle hasn’t become regular) and at the end of a period when flow is lighter. Suggest students experiment at home first.
- Tampons of varying absorbencies are available since the amount of menstrual flow varies, depending on the individual and the day of the menstrual period. Girls should use the lowest absorbency that meets their needs.
- Unlike pads, Tampons are worn internally so there’s no reason students can’t participate in activities they enjoy such as swimming, gymnastics, dance, etc. It is important to stress that a tampon should only be worn when they have their period.
- Tampon use does not affect virginity. Tampons may be used by all girls if so desired. Where a hymen exists, the tampon is inserted through a small opening in the hymen, into the vaginal canal. It is recommended that girls further discuss tampon use with a parent/guardian or trusted family member/adult.
- A period preparation kit (with pads, and/or tampons and a pair of panties) kept in a locker or backpack offer peace of mind in case a girl’s period starts unexpectedly.
Hygiene Products

With so many products in the market today, making selections can be confusing and many girls are embarrassed by that first trip to the store to buy hygiene products. This chart details which products they can consider and when they might use them:

### TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME (TSS)

Although it has been more than 20 years since the discovery of the potentially life-threatening illness known as Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), many questions still remain unanswered about its cause.

TSS is so rare that most physicians will never see a single TSS case. Individuals of any age or gender can experience TSS. About one-half of all cases occur in menstruating women and girls. There is an increased risk of TSS when using tampons. TSS is caused by toxins produced by the bacterium Staphylococcus aureus, which is commonly found in the nose and the vagina.

TSS can occur any time during a period, or shortly afterward. It is not a contagious disease; but if you have had TSS once, you can get it again. Be sure to talk with your doctor before using tampons again if you have had TSS.

#### TSS Symptoms

There are similar to the flu. They can include:

- Sudden high temperature (usually 102°F/38.8°C or higher)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- A sunburn-like rash
- Muscle aches
- Dizziness
- Fainting or feeling faint when standing up

Any of these symptoms could be an indication of TSS, though a woman may not experience all of them. If a woman is using tampons and has any of these symptoms, she should:

- Remove the tampon immediately and contact a doctor.
- Tell the doctor she has been using tampons and is concerned about TSS.

#### Reducing TSS Risk

When you discuss TSS with your students, explain that they can reduce TSS risk by:

- Always using the lowest absorbency tampon that meets your needs.
- Alternating tampon use with pads.
- Not wearing a tampon.
- Change your tampon every 4-8 hrs, and do not exceed this recommended time for tampon use.

Make sure students consult a doctor before using tampons if they have ever suffered from TSS.

#### Important Advice About Tampons

It is important that tampons are changed regularly, every 4 to 8 hours. Never use a tampon before or between periods, and never use a tampon to absorb vaginal discharge. If a girl wishes to use feminine protection for vaginal discharge, she should use a pantyliner instead.

Brought to you by always TAMPAX
Learning a little more about yourself helps you to take charge and change those things you want to change.

**Take Charge**

**HOW ARE YOU FEELING?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you feel about ...</th>
<th>GREAT</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes that occur in your body at puberty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing puberty with family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing puberty with friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being the age you are now</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How are you doing?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I shower or bathe often</th>
<th>GREAT</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wash my face twice a day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I change underclothes everyday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get 30 minutes of physical activity or exercise each day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make the healthiest food options I can</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider the feelings of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stand up for my rights and beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I complete tasks given to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Target

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE?
There are lots of things about the changes of puberty you cannot change. However, there are changes to help you be in control over many things in your life.

LIST ONE THING YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE AND USE GOAL-SETTING STEPS “TARGET” TO REACH YOUR GOAL.

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

THINK ABOUT YOUR GOAL.
I will: _______________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

ASK YOURSELF ‘CAN I DO IT?’ IS THIS A REASONABLE GOAL FOR ME?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

DETERMINE THE INFORMATION YOU MIGHT NEED TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL.

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

GET A PLAN. WHAT ARE THE STEPS YOU WILL TAKE TO REACH YOUR GOAL?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Begin your plan.
Date to begin: _________________________________
Date to achieve goal: _________________________________

TEST THE RESULTS, DID YOUR PLAN WORK?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Brought to you by always TAMPAX
QUESTIONS GIRLS ASK

Why do we go through puberty?
All the changes you experience during puberty are part of your growth and maturation. This includes a rapid growth of your bones and muscles. The changes that take place will also allow you to reproduce if you choose to pursue the responsibilities of parenthood.

What is a period?
A period is when you lose some fluid, including blood, from your vagina (the opening between your legs). Each month a soft lining thickens inside your uterus (womb). If you become pregnant, this lining is needed to look after and nourish the growing baby. If you don’t become pregnant, this lining is not needed, and most of it leaves your body through your vagina. This is your period. It is a sign of a normal and healthy body and is nothing to worry about.

How long does a period last?
It lasts for a few days – usually somewhere between 3 and 7 days.

How often will I have a period?
Most women have a period each month. The average time between periods is about 28 days, but for some women it can be less, and for some it can be more. Anywhere between 21 and 35 days is normal.

When will I start having periods?
Most girls start having periods between the ages of 10 and 16. There is no “right” time – your periods will start when your body is ready. It might be reassuring to talk to your doctor if you have not experienced any of the changes of puberty by the age of 14; or if your breasts and pubic hair have started to grow, but your periods haven’t started by the age of 16.

Will it hurt when I have a period?
Every individual’s period is different. Some girls or women hardly notice any discomfort during a period. Others might have what are called “period cramps.” These are usually an ache or cramp in the lower abdomen. Or sometimes you might have an ache in your back or along your inner thighs. For many individuals, period cramps are a normal part of menstruation. Period cramps vary in severity from person to person, if you are concerned about the pain associated with your period cramps consult your parent/ guardian or doctor. Some ways to ease period cramps:
• Try a warm bath.
• Hold a heating pad on your lower abdomen.
• Exercise.
If cramps continue to be a problem for you, make sure you visit a doctor to recommend alternative ways to manage painful symptoms (e.g., medication) and ensure there are no abnormalities.

What if I have my first period when I’m at school?
Virtually all girls are taken by surprise when they get their first period – even if they are well informed – so don’t worry. It’s probably a good idea to carry a pad and a clean pair of underwear in your bag just in case. But if you don’t have a pad, it’s fine to use some toilet paper or tissues if you need to. Ask a friend, a school nurse or a leader to help you – no one will mind. Most schools keep some spare pads for times just like this. (And stains in your underwear will soon wash out with cold water and some soap). Remember – it’s something that every adult knows about and no one will mind helping you.

Will I always have periods?
Most women have their periods from puberty until they are about 50 years old. At around this age, women’s bodies go through another change – called menopause. At this time, the ovaries stop releasing eggs and the menstrual cycle comes to a stop. The only other time you will not have periods is if you become pregnant. Then, instead of leaving your body through the vagina, the lining of the uterus stays where it is and grows to nourish the baby as it develops. Also, sometimes when girls and women are stressed, this can delay or cause irregularity in your period.

Who can I talk to if I have some worries?
It’s always good to talk to someone about your worries. The best person to talk to is probably your mom or perhaps your dad. But if you don’t feel comfortable talking to them, sometimes another older person such as an aunt, a leader, a school nurse or a friend’s mom can help a lot. Older sisters can be very useful, as can friends at school – especially if they have already started puberty themselves.

Will I lose much blood during my period?
The amount of blood in the menstrual fluid varies between individuals, and from day to day during the period. A period usually ends quite lightly, with most menstrual fluids lost in the first few days. Even then, it doesn’t come out very quickly. You lose about 4-12 teaspoons of menstrual fluid during your period, but only a small amount of it is blood. It might look like a lot, but it’s not as much as you think. Your body contains more than 5 quarts of blood, so it doesn’t miss the little bit you lose during a period and quickly makes up for it.

Will anyone notice when I have my period?
Not unless you tell them!

Is it okay to have a bath or shower when I have my period?
Definitely. During your period is the most important time to keep yourself fresh and clean.

Where can I buy sanitary pads or tampons?
You can buy them in all kinds of places, such as supermarkets, pharmacies and large discount stores. There’s no need to feel embarrassed about buying them – all women have to get them. Some girls, though, prefer their mom or an older sister to buy pads or tampons for them at first.
**How does a tampon work?**
A tampon is worn inside your body, in the vagina. It soaks up the menstrual flow internally. It is made of soft, flexible material compressed into a small, cylindrical shape, with a cord fastened securely to it. The cord remains outside your vagina, so you can remove and dispose of the tampon easily.

**What is premenstrual syndrome?**
Premenstrual syndrome, or PMS, is the name given to symptoms some girls experience 1 to 14 days before their period begins. These symptoms are physical and/or emotional, and include breast tenderness and feeling moody or sad. It’s quite normal to feel a bit up and down at times, especially with all these changes going on. Emphasize that not all girls experience PMS.

**Why do I feel all heavy and awkward?**
Before your period your body sometimes stores more water than usual, which can leave you feeling bloated. It’s also normal to feel a bit clumsy during puberty – that’s because you’re growing and changing so fast.

**Why do my breasts always hurt right before my period?**
The change in the level of hormones is responsible. It causes fluid to build up in your breasts, and this makes them sore and feel heavier. But don’t worry, this feeling will soon go away when your period has finished.

**When will I shave?**
It depends on when thicker, darker hair begins to appear on your legs, underarms and in the pubic area and if you choose to remove it. Shaving is a personal choice and is a safe method for hair removal. Consult a parent/guardian or trusted adult to learn more about your options and safe hair removal practices.

**QUESTIONS BOYS ASK**

**Is it normal to put on weight during puberty?**
Definitely. An adult man has a broader and more muscular body than a young boy. Puberty is not a good time to limit the amount of food you eat. You are meant to put on weight during puberty because your body is growing. Exercising regularly and making healthy food choices that align will support your healthy development by giving your body the energy that it needs.

**How tall will I be?**
It’s difficult to predict how tall you will be, but height is usually determined by heredity, that is, how tall your parents and grandparents are. If both parents are tall, chances are you will probably be tall. If both parents are short, you may be shorter. But this is not true for everybody. Occasionally, a boy will continue to grow or get another growth spurt in his late teens.

**When will I shave?**
It depends on how soon your facial hair appears and how thick it becomes, as well as your personal preference. Generally, heavy facial hair doesn’t develop until later in puberty, maybe not until you’re 16 or older.

**Does a lot of body hair mean you have more testosterone?**
No, testosterone is the hormone that starts body hair growing. How much hair you have is determined by your racial/ethnic group and heredity, not by how much testosterone you have.

**I think I’m growing breasts.**
It’s quite 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.

**Why is one of my testicles higher than the other?**
This is quite normal. No one is perfectly symmetrical, and generally the right one is higher than the left one.

**When I examined my testicles, I found a ridge down the back. Is this normal?**
Yes. What you can 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.

**Sometimes I get erections for no apparent reason, and I feel embarrassed that someone will notice.**
It is normal to get erections at different times, even if you are not thinking about someone you’re attracted to or sex. 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 again on its own.

**Do men stop having erections when they get older?**
No. If a man is healthy, he can have erections all his life.

**I have been having wet dreams for three years now. Will they ever stop?**
You will experience wet dreams less frequently as your body progresses 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.

**What if someone notices your erection?**
Most people are likely to notice you acting in such a way as to try to hide one than they are to notice you have one. Your best bet is to act naturally and don’t call attention to it. And remember, it always feels noticeable to YOU because you’re the one that feels it. But unless you’re wearing something tight fitting (like stretchy bicycle shorts) it really isn’t as noticeable as it feels.
Glossary

ACNE (AK-nee) a bad case of pimples

ADOLESCENCE (ad-oh-LESS-ens) the period of physical and psychological development from the beginning of puberty to maturity

ANUS (AY-nus) the opening where feces or bowel movements leave the body

APOCRINE GLANDS (AHPO-krine) sweat glands under the arms and in the genital area

AREOLA (ah-REE-uh-luh) the ring of skin around the nipple

BREASTS the milk-producing darker glands in a woman

BLADDER a sac inside the body that holds urine

CERVIX (SIR-vicks) the lower part of the uterus

CIRCUMCISION (sir-kum-SISH-un) an operation which removes the foreskin of the penis

CLITORIS (KLIT-or-is) a small sensitive organ above a female’s urinary opening

DERMIS (DER-miss) the layer of skin that makes new skin cells

ECCRINE GLANDS (ek-rin) sweat glands found all over the body

EGG also called an ovum, it’s the female reproductive cell

EJACULATION (ee-JACK-you-lay-shun) when semen comes out of the penis

EMBRYO (EM-bree-oh) a fetus during its first eight weeks of development in the uterus

ENDOMETRIUM (en-doe-MEE-tree-um) spongy, blood-filled tissue that lines the uterus

ERECTION (e-REK-shun) occurs when the penis fills with blood and becomes hard

ESTROGEN (es-tro-jen) a female sex hormone produced in the ovaries

FALLOPIAN TUBES (fuh-LOPE-ee-un) narrow tubes between the ovaries and the uterus

FERTILIZATION (fur-till-eye-ZAY-shun) the joining of a female egg and a male sperm to form an embryo

FETUS (FEE-tus) the unborn baby, after eight weeks of development in the uterus

FORESKIN (FOUR-skin) the skin around the head of the penis

GENDER (JEN-der) the socially constructed characteristics of women and men

GENITALS (JEN-a-tulls) the inside and outside sex organs

HORMONES (HOR-moans) chemical messages that tell parts of the body what to do

HYMEN (HI-mun) a ring of skin that may partly cover the vaginal opening

LABIA (LAY-bee-ah) the folds of skin around the opening of the vagina

MENOPAUSE (MEN-oh-paws) the end of a woman’s menstrual cycles, usually occurring when she is in her late forties or fifties

MENSTRUATION (MEN-stroo-AY-shun) the monthly shedding of the lining of the uterus if a woman is not pregnant

MENSTRUAL CYCLE (MEN-stroo-al SIGH-cul) the process of ovulation and menstruation that occurs approximately once a month beginning at puberty and ending with menopause. Also referred to as a period.

MENSTRUAL FLUID (MEN-stroo-al FLOO-id) the uterine lining, consisting of spongy tissue and blood, that flows out the body through the vagina during a woman’s period

NIPPLE (nip-pull) the small raised part in the centre of the breast

NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS (nok-TUR-nal eh-MISH-uns) an ejaculation that occurs involuntarily while asleep, also called a wet dream

OVARIES (OH-vah-reez) the two glands that make the female sex hormones and egg cells

OVULATION (OV-you-lay-shun) the release of a mature egg from the ovary

OVUM (OH-vum) egg, the female reproductive cell (plural - OVA)

PENIS (PEE-niss) the tube-shaped sex organ of males which hangs outside their body

PERIOD (peer-ee-uhd) the time when a woman is menstruating

PERIOD CRAMPS (peer-ee-uhd kramps) also referred to as menstrual cramps - physical discomfort experienced during a female’s period
Pimple: sebum trapped beneath the surface of a pore, which can become enlarged and inflamed, and cause a pimple.

Pituitary Gland (pih-TYOU-ih-ter-e) the gland at the base of the brain which is responsible for producing hormones, some of which regulate the developmental changes which occur during puberty.

Progesterone (PRO-jes-ter-own) a female sex hormone produced in the ovaries.

Prostate Gland (PROSS-tate) a male gland near the bladder that adds fluid to semen.

Puberty (PEW-bur-tee) the stage of life during which human males and females become sexually mature.

Pubic Area (pyoo-bik) the area between the legs where the genitals are located and where pubic hair appears during puberty.

Scrotum (SKROW-tum) the soft sac in males that holds the testicles or testes.

Sebaceous Glands (suh-BAY-shus) the oil making glands of the skin.

Sebum (SEE-bum) the oily substance made in the sebaceous glands.

Seminal Vesicles (SEM-i-nul VES-i-kels) two small pouches that make part of the liquid in semen.

Smeagm (SMEG-muh) a secretion from the sebaceous glands that produces a white, cheesy substance found between the folds of the vulva and under the foreskin of the penis.

Sperm (SPURM) the male sex cell required to fertilize an egg in order to make a baby.

Spermatogenesis (SPURM-a-toe-JEN-a-sis) the name of the process for producing sperm in the testicles.

Sweat Glands (SWET) the parts of your body that regulate body temperature by releasing water and salt.

Testes (TES-teez) the testicles.

Testicles (TES-ti-kuls) male sex glands that make hormones and sperm.

Testosterone (tes-TAH-stuh-ron) the male hormone, produced in the testicles, that causes many of the changes of the male’s puberty.

Toxic Shock Syndrome a rare illness (or infection) associated with tampon use.

Urethra (you-REE-thrah) the tube through which urine and semen leaves the male body, and urine leaves the female body.

Uterus (YOU-ter-us) the hollow muscular organ in females that holds and nourishes the fetus, or unborn baby. Also called the womb.

Vagina (VAH-jeye-nah) the passageway of muscles that joins the uterus to outside the body.

Vas deferens (VAYZ DEF-eh-renz) the small tubes through which sperm travel from the testicles to the urethra.

Vulva (VUL-vah) the outside sex organs of a female.

Wet Dreams an ejaculation that occurs involuntarily while asleep, also called a nocturnal emission.
Other Useful Resources

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES
Changes in Me: A Resource on Puberty and Adolescent Development
http://www.peelregion.ca/health/commhlth/bodyimg/changes-in-me/

Discovery Education – Changes of Puberty

Growing Up OK Resource

Human Development and Sexual Health, Ages 11 to 14 Years
http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics/content.asp?hwid=te7233#te7234
http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics/content.asp?hwid=te7260

KidsHealth – All About Puberty

Planned Parenthood – Puberty
https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/puberty

SexualityandU – Puberty
http://www.sexandu.ca/

Teaching Sexual Health – Lesson Plans: Puberty
https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/lesson-plans-resources/resource-finder/

INTERNET RESOURCES
Visit the following sponsor Brand websites for additional information:

always.com   TAMPAX.com
If you have any comments or suggestions for improvement, please contact Ophea and/or PHE Canada through their websites below.

Ontario: Ophea
1 Concorde Gate, Suite 608
Toronto, ON M3C 3N6
416-426-7120
info@ophea.net
www.ophea.net

Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada)
2451 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, ON K1H 7X7
613-523-1348
www.phecanada.ca