

# Lesson 7

## Healthy behavior

Progressing through puberty in a healthy way.

## Health terms

estrogen  
genitals  
gland  
hormone  
mature  
menstruation  
penis  
progesterone  
puberty  
pubic  
reproductive  
self-conscious  
testicles  
testosterone  
vagina

## Student Journal Puberty

### Journal entry

Think about how you are different now than you were 3 years ago.

How has your body changed?

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How have your thoughts or feelings changed?

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How have your relationships with family and friends changed?

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### Feelings about changes

How do you think young people your age feel about these changes?

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**Puberty is the stage of life when your body changes from a child's body to an adult body. Your brain, feelings and relationships change too.**



# A Time of Change

## ► What Is Puberty?

Puberty is the time when your body changes from a child's body to an adult body. Puberty can begin any time between ages 9 and 16. Puberty happens to everybody. And each person goes through puberty at their own pace.

During puberty, *glands* in your body begin to produce *hormones*. Hormones are chemicals that signal parts of the body to grow and change.

The body's *reproductive* or sex organs are the parts that allow people to reproduce, or have children. During puberty, hormones cause these organs to *mature*. After puberty, young people can get pregnant or cause a pregnancy. But even though their bodies can reproduce, most young people aren't ready to raise or support a child until many years after puberty.

## ► Physical Changes

Hormones cause bodies to grow and change.

These are some of the main changes that can happen during puberty:

- Body shape changes. For example, hips may get wider, waist may get smaller, shoulders may get broader, breasts may develop.
- Voice may get deeper.
- Sweat more and may have body odor.
- Get oilier skin and can have pimples.
- Hair grows under arms.
- Hair grows around *genitals* (*pubic* area).
- The *vagina* makes a white, sticky substance called *discharge*. This is normal. It's how the vagina cleans itself.
- Ovaries and uterus mature. Body begins to menstruate or have periods.
- *Testicles* grow larger. One testicle usually hangs lower than the other. This is normal.
- Penis grows larger and can get erections.
- Can have dreams that cause sexual arousal.
- Can have wet dreams when the penis ejaculates semen during sleep.

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# A Time of Change

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## ► Mental and Emotional Changes

The brain is also changing during puberty. Teens understand the results of their actions more clearly than they did as children. They are able to think and solve problems in more complex ways. They begin to be able to notice and control their impulses. This ability keeps developing until people are in their early 20s.

Feelings change too. Hormones can cause teens to be more emotional and to have more ups and downs in their feelings. Moods may change quickly. Young people become more aware of their bodies as they go through puberty. Some may feel excited about growing up. Many feel shy, embarrassed or worried about the changes.

Young people who develop earlier or later than their friends may feel *self-conscious*. But, in a few years, the changes even out. Each person has their own time clock that determines when puberty will start. Some people mature earlier, some later. Almost all young people wonder if the things they're feeling, thinking and going through during puberty are normal.

## ► Social Changes

Friends often become more important during puberty. Teens may care more about being liked or fitting in. Sometimes teens may feel left out and lonely. Almost everyone does. Old friendships can change and new friendships begin.

Some young people begin to have romantic feelings toward others. These feelings are normal. They also can be strong and confusing. It's important for teens to learn how to express these feelings in ways that respect themselves and others.

Sometimes young people may have problems at home during puberty. Teens want a new, more adult relationship with their family. But they may not know how to get it. Teens may argue with parents, or feel embarrassed by things parents say or do. Family members are going through changes too. They need to learn to live with their teen as a more grown-up person. This can be hard for everyone.

# A Time of Change

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## ► Getting Through Puberty

**Here are some things that can make puberty easier:**

- **Remember that you're not alone.** Puberty happens to everyone. Your parents went through it. Your friends and classmates are all going through it. Each person has their own way of growing and changing, but everyone grows and changes. Think about the person you want to be and make the choices that are right for you.
- **Get the information you need.** Find an adult you can trust. Your parents, other relatives, doctors, nurses, teachers and school counselors can give you support. Know how to find reliable answers to your questions.
- **Connect with your family.** Find things to talk about and share with family members. Help out at home and follow through on things you say you'll do. This makes it easier for you and your parents to feel trust and stay close.
- **Take good care of your body.** Eat healthy food. Be physically active. Get enough sleep. This can make it easier to get through the emotional ups and downs.
- **Pay attention to hygiene.** Changing hormones can mean you sweat more and may have body odor. It's important to shower or bathe regularly, wash your hair and use deodorant. Keeping your body clean helps you look and feel good.
- **Work on a skill.** Find something you like to do and can do well. It could be sports, music, cooking, studying, building or fixing things, training your dog, drawing or writing stories. Having something you do well helps you feel good about yourself and worry less about the changes you're going through.



# What I Learned About Puberty

**Directions:** Complete the statements to describe the different changes of puberty.

This is 1 **social change** that happens during puberty:

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This is 1 **mental or emotional change** that happens during puberty:

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These are 5 **physical changes** that happen during puberty:

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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4. 

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5. 

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These are 2 **things I can do to help** make puberty easier:

1. 

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2. 

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## Self-Check

- ☐ I described 1 social change that happens during puberty.
- ☐ I described 1 mental or emotional change that happens during puberty.
- ☐ I described 5 physical changes that happen during puberty.
- ☐ I described 2 things that can help make puberty easier.

