

The amazing thing about puberty...

... is that you really don't know what will happen next. Puberty is defined as the period at which adolescents reach sexual maturity and become capable of having babies. It includes menstruation, pregnancy, pimples, the awkwardness of puberty and interest in the opposite sex. For learning more about one of the most confusing times of your life read on!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY BODY?

When puberty starts (it can begin at any time around the ages of 10-12) your body begins to change. You begin to grow breasts, your hips begin to expand and soon enough you can differentiate your waist from your upper torso.

You start looking less like a girl and more like a woman.

Just when you thought you had enough hair, it sprouts from your armpits, and your private parts (known as pubic hair). All these changes occur because of hormones. Hormones are chemicals produced in small amounts in our bodies, in order to help co-ordinate processes such as growth and reproduction (having babies).

THAT TIME OF THE MONTH

The ability to have babies comes through menstruation, which is also known as your period. Your period is a link in the chain of reproduction along with ovulation. These events happen monthly and is called the menstrual cycle. When you have your first period it means that your body is able to have a baby. Some girls start their period as early as eight, while some as late as sixteen. Every girl has her own time.

OVULATION

When puberty arrives eggs sometimes referred to as ova, which are present in a girl from the time she is born are released from the ovaries into the uterus one at a time. Only one egg is released a month and can survive for up to 36 hours. If a girl has sex at this time she will become pregnant. If she is not pregnant she will begin to menstruate after roughly 12 to 14 days.

MENSTRUATION

During menstruation a girl will bleed from her vagina releasing blood and tissue from the uterus for 3 to 6 days. This is a normal process that happens every month in girls who are not pregnant.

That time of the month also comes hand in hand for some girls with moodiness, short tempers and not forgetting cramps!! Menstruation is something women have to live with until menopause, which occurs when you're about forty-five years old.

ZITS, SPOTS, PIMPLES

Other hormonal changes include pimples.

Pimples are caused by the over production of oil by the glands under the skin. Pimples can occur on the face, back, chest and bottom areas. Don't worry, pimples go away eventually. Don't forget that although dirty skin may not cause pimples, sleeping with make-up helps a pimple to pop up.

KEEP THOSE PIMPLES IN CHECK

- Don't make pimples spread by squeezing them
- Don't get stressed out! Pimples go away once your hormones stabilize
- Eat fresh fruit and vegetables, and drink lots of water, they help keep the pimples away
- Use lightly medicated soaps and facial washes to keep away bacteria

Remember good personal hygiene is the best way to avoid or fight pimples.

SURVIVE PUBERTY

What with menstruation, body changes and pimples, life just seems to be the low score, heading down into the negatives. As if that's not bad enough, you suddenly can't find enough clothes to hide your body. Basically you just feel awkward! And that guy you've known since Grade 1 suddenly isn't disgusting but a rather cute potential boyfriend. The disgusting (now cute) boy who once thought you were disgusting now gives you a second look! Yep, puberty is the time of uncertainty, the time when you think that YOU are the only one going through what you are going through. Luckily enough that's not true!!

Puberty can also make you feel confused, bad-tempered or upset easily.

Puberty is a period of change when you are no longer a child, but growing up. Bear with it because you're on your way to becoming a woman!



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