

Taking care of your body during puberty

Learning objective

Students identify appropriate self care practices which become increasingly important as they go through puberty.

Take Home Messages

There are a number of things that help us to have a healthy body: healthy eating, regular exercise, enough rest/sleep/relaxation, avoiding alcohol and other drugs, personal hygiene.

Personal hygiene is keeping the external parts of your body clean and healthy (e.g. hair, nails, skin).

Looking after our bodies and health helps to prevent body odour, infections, illness and the spread of disease.

Having a healthy body and self care practices also helps us have good mental health and wellbeing, self esteem and confidence

Materials

- Non-transparent bags such as library bags, pillow cases, canvas shopping bags tied with string or elastic bands for mystery feely bags - enough for 1 item per bag or they can have a few items in each bag
- Items for mystery feely bags:
 - body wash/soap
 - towel/face cloth
 - facial cleanser/acne cream
 - shampoo and conditioner
 - deodorant/antiperspirant
 - toothpaste and toothbrush
 - mouthwash/dental floss
 - hair brush//comb
 - clean underpants and socks
 - nail clippers
 - hand sanitiser
 - tissues
 - a fruit or vegetable (to represent healthy eating)
 - re-usable water bottle; pillow/blanket (to represent sleep)
 - tennis ball/basketball/other sports equipment (to represent exercise)
 - book (to represent relaxation)
 - pads, tampons, period knickers (optional as may wish to introduce this separately in menstruation lesson)
- (Please note: all mystery bag items should be cleaned in between uses for infection control)
- Post it notes/labels for class display
- Butcher's paper with a life-sized body outline
- 6 sided dice (or a ball with the numbers 1-6 written on it)
- Video by Amaze Org - [Taking care of your body during puberty \(2min 45 sec\)](#) (external link)

Before You Get Started

Before you get started

- Read Background teacher notes:
 - [Puberty - taking care of your body during puberty](#)
- Read Essential information:
 - [Protective interrupting](#) - All staff in the room need to know and understand how to use this technique to prevent students from potentially disclosing sensitive information or abuse in front of other students.
 - [Dealing with disclosures](#) - All staff in the room must be aware of the school and legal procedures if a student discloses personal issues, particularly disclosures of sexual abuse.
- Preview the video [Taking care of your body during puberty](#) (2min 45sec) to determine suitability for your students.
- Speak to the community health nurse if there are any students in the class that you may be concerned about in terms of personal hygiene or home circumstances.
- Consider any cultural needs. Read: [Co-ed vs gender segregated lessons](#) and [Cultural considerations when teaching Aboriginal students](#),

Learning Activities

Group agreement

Teaching tip: A [group agreement](#) must be established before any Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) program begins to ensure a safe learning environment. Read [Essential information: Establishing a group agreement](#) for tips on how to create one and what to include.

1. Revise the class [group agreement](#).

Mystery feely bag

2. Using a [grouping strategy](#) to place students in groups of 2 or 3 (depending on how many mystery bags you have created).
3. Hand out the 'mystery feely bags' to pairs/groups of students.
4. ? Explain:

"By only feeling the items within the bag, I would like you to guess what you think each item is."

4. Invite each group to offer their guesses as to what the items might be and have them open the bags and display their items.
5. Once all of the items are revealed, invite students to guess what all of the items have in common.

Possible answers: self care, hygiene, looking after yourself physically, how to keep yourself clean.

6. ? Explain:

"These are all items we can use to help keep the external parts of our body clean and keep us healthy and help us to feel good. This helps to prevent odour (smells), illnesses, infections and spread of disease."

Video - Taking care of your body during puberty

7. Explain:

"We are going to watch a video that is about 3 minutes long about taking care of your body during puberty. I would give you a chance to ask questions after the video."

8. Watch the video: [Taking care of your body during puberty \(2min 45sec\)](#) (external link)
9. Ask the students what messages they got from the video.
10. Answer any questions the students have about the video.

Class display - how to look after your body during puberty

11. In their existing pairs/groups, ask the students to use the information from the video to write how each item from the Mystery Bag activity can be used to help maintain appropriate hygiene/self care.

For example: Shampoo - Wash your hair with shampoo regularly to get rid of oil, dirt and bad odours.

12. Have the class sit or stand in a circle with the life-sized body outline on the floor in the centre of the circle.
13. Each pair/group presents their information to the class and places their item and label where it belongs on the body outline. Ask students to think about how they can represent items that cover more than one body place.

Teaching tip: Ideas for display area - table with items and labels displayed; items in feely bags with labels giving clues as to what the item inside is; photographs of items on a display board.

14. Ensure students have covered all of the following key messages:

- body wash/soap/towel - wash body with soap/body wash daily, feet can get especially sweaty/smelly and need to be washed and dried carefully each day
- facial cleanser/acne cream - facial cleanser and creams can be used to help reduce acne (speak to a trusted adult or doctor if you are concerned about acne)
- shampoo and conditioner - wash hair regularly to keep it clean from oil, dirt and bad odours
- deodorant/antiperspirant - use deodorant to prevent body odour (note the difference between a fragrance and an antiperspirant)
- toothpaste and toothbrush - brush your teeth with toothpaste/toothbrush twice a day and visit a dentist regularly
- mouthwash/dental floss - floss teeth daily
- hair brush//comb - brush hair to help keep it clean and tidy
- clean underpants and socks - wear clean clothes and use clean underwear and socks daily
- nail clippers - to trim nails and help keep clean, avoid biting nails as there is lots of bacteria under nails that can cause illnesses and infections, artificial nails have a greater risk of bacteria sitting under them
- hand sanitiser - use throughout the day to help prevent spread of infection
- tissues - sneeze or cough into a tissue, put tissue in bin straight away and wash hands. If no

tissues are available, sneeze into elbow (not hands)

- fruit and vegetables (to represent healthy eating) - eat 2 serves of fruit and 5 services of vegetables every day to keep healthy and well
 - re-usable water bottle - drink plenty of water every day to keep hydrated and healthy. Avoid sugary drinks, and energy drinks
 - pillow/blanket - get at least 8 hours of sleep a night keep energised, healthy and well. Avoid screens 90 minutes before bedtime for good sleep hygiene
 - tennis ball/basketball/other sports equipment (to represent exercise) - get at least one hour of exercise a day
 - book (to represent relaxation) - have time and ways to relax (without screens)
 - pads, tampons, period knickers (optional as may wish to introduce this separately in menstruation lesson) - variety of products to choose from for periods
13. Discuss additional important messages that do not have mystery feely bag items to represent them:
- phones and social media - it is important to have time away from phones and social media and to know how to seek help if we are having any problems related to social media (e.g. bullying, sexting, self-esteem, eating disorders, etc)
 - alcohol or other drugs - caffeine, alcohol, smoking, vaping, and other drugs affect growing bodies especially. They can affect body growth, brain development, sleep and mental health
 - trusted adults - think about who the trusted adults are in your life. It might be a parent, an auntie/uncle, grandparent, teacher, coach, youth worker, doctor, etc. It is important to have a trusted adult that you can turn to if you need help
 - reliable information - the Internet and social media is full of misinformation, it is vital to know reliable websites and organisations to get accurate information from particularly when it relates to our health

Teaching tip: This lesson is intended to introduce each of these topics at a very basic level. Each of these messages will be covered in more depth in further lessons. Students can also add questions to the question box to raise any information they would like to cover further.

3-2-1 Reflection

14. Display the following sentence stems on the board:

- 1: A health snack I can bring to school is....
 - 2: A way to get active is...
 - 3: A way to practice self care is...
 - 4: A way to keep my body healthy is...
 - 5: Growing up means to me...
 - 6: A way I like to relax is....
15. Ask for volunteers to roll a dice (or use a ball with 6 numbers written on it) and complete the sentence stem relating to the number thrown.

Health Promoting Schools

Background teacher note: [Health promoting schools framework](#).

Partnerships with parents

- [Talk Soon. Talk Often: a guide for parents talking to their kids about sex](#) is a free hardcopy resource that can be bulk ordered by schools and [website](#). Send a copy home to parents prior to starting your RSE program. The booklet offers ages and stage related information on puberty (and other topics) so that parents can reinforce the topics covered in class. ([How to order hard copies](#).) Provide the link to parents on school websites and social media.
- Order copies of [Puberty](#) and [Relationships, sex and other stuff](#) to be sent home for parents. Provide the link to parents on school websites and social media.
- Run a parent workshop and run this activity with parents to model the content that will be covered in your RSE program.
- Run a parent and child evening session, where the children can teach the parents what they have been learning about.

Partnerships with school staff

- Invite the school nurse to your class to answer some of the question box questions. This serves two purposes - they may be able to answer some of the questions you are unsure of and helps to build a relationships between the students and the nurse.
- The school nurse may like to take small groups of students requiring additional or specialised care to run separate activities with on this topic.

Reproductive systems

Learning objective

Students develop an understanding of the parts and functions of the reproductive systems. This provides foundation knowledge for learning about about puberty, menstruation, conception and pregnancy.

Take Home Messages

Bodies grow and change over time.

Everyone's body is unique and varies in size, shape, function.

There are ways that male and female bodies are the same and there are ways that they are different.

The reproductive system consists of the body parts that are needed to create a baby.

Both the male and female reproductive system play an important role in reproduction (creating a baby).

Materials

- 'Goodie bag' made up of assorted craft and/or reusable objects e.g. glue, sticky tape, plastic cup, blu tack, balloons, plastic spoon, straws, pop sticks, bottle tops, etc (one per group)
- Large pieces of poster paper or butcher's paper (1 per group)

- Room preparation: space for small groups to work with large poster paper (e.g. desks pushed to the side for clear floor space)
- Teaching resource: male or female reproductive system labelled diagrams (one per group - electronic or hard copy)
- Optional: [Puberty](#) booklets; or internet access
- Optional: Magno-mate kit from SHQ

Before You Get Started

- Read Background teacher notes:
 - [Puberty](#)
 - [Reproductive and sexual anatomy - Females](#)
 - [Reproductive and sexual anatomy - Males](#)
- [Protective interrupting](#) - All staff in the room need to know and understand how to use this technique to prevent students from potentially disclosing sensitive information or abuse in front of other students.
- [Dealing with disclosures](#) - All staff in the room must be aware of the school and legal procedures if a student discloses personal issues, particularly disclosures of sexual abuse.
- Room preparation - This lesson requires space for students to work in groups - either on the floor or at desks. Desks can be pushed to the sides of the classroom or a music room/hall/art room/etc can be used.

NB: Ensure the chosen room has sufficient privacy. Students may feel self conscious and disengage if other students or teachers are able to see inside the room or enter the room unexpectedly.

Learning Activities

Group agreement

Teaching Tip: Relationships and sexuality may be an exciting and interesting topic for some students; for others it may be embarrassing, uncomfortable or scary. Introducing each lesson with fun energisers that promote safe touch and group collaboration can help students to feel more comfortable.

2. [Birthday line up \(external link\)](#): Challenge students to line up in the order of their birthdays without talking.

Easier version - line up by day and month only.

Harder version - line up by day, month and year. Avoid giving further instructions as part of the challenge is for students to determine which order the line is going in and different ways of communicating their birthday without talking.

3. Once the students have lined themselves in order have them call out their birthdays as you move down the line to see if they ordered themselves correctly.
4. Briefly discuss the various methods of communication used.

? What methods worked well?

? What methods did not work so well?

5. Divide the line into groups of 4-6 for the next activity (this creates mixed ability and random peer groups).

Energiser: Birthday line up

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'Goodie bag' models

6. Ask:

? What are some ways that a male's and female's bodies are the same?

(Both usually have legs, arms, eyes, nipples, toes, hair, etc. Both can usually talk, dance, eat, etc).

Teaching Tip: This is a good opportunity to remind students of the diversity of bodies. Some people have disabilities, injuries or illnesses that mean their bodies may look or function in different ways. Everyone has a unique body that deserves respect.

? What are some of the ways that male's and female's bodies are different?

(Males usually have a penis, females usually have a vulva, females usually have larger breasts than males as their breasts may produce milk for babies, males may have more facial hair than females, females usually have a uterus, males usually have testicles, etc)

Teaching tip: Using inclusive language such as 'usually' and 'may' is a simple way to help make all people feel more included. Avoid using words like 'normally' and 'always' as it can make any other variation seem abnormal and negative.

7. Say:

"Many of the differences between male and female bodies are to do with the reproductive organs/system.

? What does reproduction mean?

(Reproduction means to make more of or to multiply).

These are the parts of the body that are needed to create a baby. Both male and female bodies play an important role in reproduction.

Today we are going to look at the parts of the male and female reproductive system and their functions.

? What does function mean?

(Function means 'what they do')."

8. Provide each group with a large piece of poster paper, a 'goodie bag' and a copy of a male or female reproductive system with labels ([Teacher Resource: Male and female reproductive system - labelled](#)). Optional: copies of [Puberty](#).
9. Instruct half of the groups to create the 'male reproductive system' and the other half to create the 'female reproductive system' using the items in the bag.
10. They do not need to use everything in the bag and they can label the parts using coloured markers.

Teaching tip: Whilst it is important that students know the correct names for body parts such as the penis, testicles, vulva, vagina, uterus/womb and clitoris, it is not important for students to know all of the reproductive organ technical terms for every reproductive part. For example, knowing that sperm travels through tubes that run from the testicles to the tip of the penis and out of the body is more important than labelling the epididymis and vas deferens. Understanding that there are glands that add fluid to the semen is more important than being able to spell the names of the different glands. This activity is to help students to understand how the parts are connected and the basic functions to help understand future concepts of puberty, menstruation and conception.

11. Invite students to do a 'walk around' to see all of the models. Ask volunteers to share a description of their model so far.

Teaching tip: In RSE it is important to avoid calling upon specific students for contributions, always ask for volunteers and remind students of their 'right to pass' as part of the [group agreement](#).

Reflection: Everyone is unique

12. Use the 'goodie bag' models and relate each part to the magno-mate kit to provide a simple explanation of the male and female reproductive system.

(The [Magno-mate reproductive kit](#) is available for purchase or hire from [Sexual Health Quarters](#). Alternatively, use the images provided in 'Related Items').

This need only be a simple, story-like explanation.

e.g. For female reproductive system:

Say:

"The ovaries are where the eggs are made and stored. They also make hormones. Most females are born with all of the (immature) eggs that they will ever have. These tubes (fallopian tubes)

carry the eggs from the ovaries to the uterus. The uterus is where a baby grows during pregnancy. The vagina is the passageway from the uterus to the outside of the body. It is where the baby comes out and the penis goes in during sexual intercourse. The vulva is the name for the outside sexual parts - the inner lips, outer lips and the clitoris. The clitoris has lots of nerve endings, like the penis and is very sensitive. The outer lips usually become covered in hair during puberty. Both the inner and outer lips come in many different shapes, sizes and colours. This is the bladder, where urine (wee) collects. This tube (urethra) carries urine out of the body from the bladder. The opening is just in front of the opening of the vagina. This is the anus, where faeces (poo) comes out.

e.g. For male reproductive system

Say:

"The scrotum is the sack that holds the testicles. This is where the sperm are made. Millions of sperm are made every day. The testicles also make hormones. This is the penis, it comes in a range of sizes, shapes and colours. It has lots of nerve endings and is very sensitive. The penis has spongy tissue that can fill with blood and make the penis go hard (erection). These are the tubes that carry sperm from each of the testicles to the outside of the body through the tip of the penis. These glands make fluid that make part of the semen (which carries the sperm). This tube (urethra) runs from the bladder to the opening in the tip of the penis. It carries urine (wee) and semen out of the body. The bladder is where urine collects. The fold of skin that covers the head of the penis is called the foreskin. Some people have part or all of this skin removed (often as a baby) - this is called being circumcised. This is the anus, where faeces (poo) comes out."

14. Explain:

"Everyone's body is different. Just as people have different height and hair colour, people also have differences in their reproductive organs. Penises, breasts and vulvas all come in different shapes, sizes and colours (despite what we see in the media).

Some people are born with natural variations in reproductive organs (and hormones and chromosomes) that don't fit into the typical definitions for male and female bodies that we have looked at today. This is called intersex.

Our bodies change over time. Puberty is the time when the body changes from a child to an adult. The changes to the reproductive organs are what makes it possible for people to have babies. We will be looking at these changes over the next few lessons."

The most important thing to remember is that everyone has a unique body that deserves respect."

Question box

Teaching tip: Establishing a question box when starting any RSE program is useful to allow students to ask questions anonymously and have them answered in a safe environment. Read [Essential information: Question box guide](#) for how to set up the system and how to answer tricky questions.

15. Provide students with time to write questions for the question box.

16. If the question box is already set up, you may like to choose some questions related to the reproductive systems to answer.

Body changes during puberty

Learning objective

Students are introduced to the physical, emotional and social changes that take place during puberty.

Take Home Messages

Puberty is the time when the body changes from a child to an adult. These changes usually mean that a person is physically able to have a baby.

There is a wide range of 'normal' when it comes to puberty - everyone's body is different and should be respected.

Girls (or people born with ovaries/uterus) usually start puberty between 8-13 years. Boys (or people born with testicles) usually start puberty between 9-14 years.

Puberty happens over a number of years (usually about 2-5 years).

There are some changes that happen mostly to boys (or people with testicles/penis) and others that happen mostly to girls (or people with ovaries/vulva). Some changes usually happen to everyone.

Changes during puberty can be physical, emotional and social.

Materials

- butcher's paper with a gingerbread shaped body outline already drawn - 1 for each group of 5/6 students
- coloured markers
- some up-tempo music

Before You Get Started

- [Protective interrupting](#) - Teachers need to know and understand how to use this technique to prevent students from potentially disclosing sensitive information or abuse in front of other students.
- [Dealing with disclosures](#) - Teachers must be aware of the school and legal procedures if a student discloses personal issues, particularly disclosures of sexual abuse.
- [Question box](#) - Have a question box available in every lesson to allow students the opportunity to ask questions that may be too embarrassing or unsafe for them to ask openly in class. See [Setting up the question box](#) and [Types of questions](#) for further information. For ways to answer some of the curly questions, see [Student FAQs](#).
- Speak to the community health nurse if there are any students in the class that you may need more individual support in terms of puberty changes and home circumstances. This may include students who are transgender, have intersex variations, disabilities, special educational needs, history of trauma and abuse, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students, etc.
- Consider any cultural needs. Read: [Co-ed vs gender segregated lessons](#) and [Cultural considerations when teaching Aboriginal students](#).
- Read the Background teacher note: [Puberty](#)

Learning Activities

Group agreement

Teaching tip: A group agreement must be established before any Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) program begins to ensure a safe learning environment. Read: [Essential information: Establishing a group agreement](#) for tips on how to create one and what to include.

1. Revise the class [group agreement](#).

??Trigger warning: It is important to be mindful of the diversity of bodies during this lesson. Some people may have been born with natural variations in their body (e.g. intersex variations) that means puberty will happen differently for them. Some people have disabilities, injuries or illnesses that mean their bodies may look and function in different ways and go through puberty in different ways (or not at all). Careful choice of wording is needed to help everyone feel included and respected.

Puberty can be a particularly challenging time for people who are gender diverse and people who have intersex variations (some people only find out that they have intersex variations when they do not experience puberty as expected). It is important to remember that you may not be aware of these students in your class as they may not have disclosed this to you or anyone.

Puberty

1. Ask:

? What is puberty?

(Puberty is the time when the body changes from a child to an adult)

? Why do we go through puberty?

(These changes usually mean that a person is physically able to have a baby)

? When does puberty happen?

(There is a wide range of 'normal' when it comes to puberty. Everyone is different. Girls (or people born with ovaries/uterus) usually start puberty between 8-13 years. Boys (or people born with testicles/penis) usually start puberty between 9-14 years)

? How quickly does puberty happen?

(Puberty happens over a number of years - usually about 2-5 years)

2. Explain:

"During puberty there are a number of changes that happen. We are going to explore some of the different changes in the next activity."

Puberty race

3. Split students into groups of approximately 5 or 6 using a [grouping strategy](#).
4. Give each group a gingerbread shaped body outline (these can be put up on walls around the room or on the floor/desks) and coloured markers.
5. Have students line up near to their group's gingerbread shaped body outline.
6. Explain:

"When I put the music on, you are going to take turns to race to the gingerbread body outline poster

and add one change that happens during puberty.

You can use words, symbols, pictures - or a mix of all these.

Have a think about whether this change happens mostly to boys, mostly to girls or if it usually happens to everyone. How will you record that on your poster?

Don't worry about spelling for now - this is just to get your initial ideas on paper. This is a race to see how many ideas you can come up with. You will have the length of this song (approx 3-4min)"

Teaching tip: Using music can help put students at ease to feel safe to participate. Using up-tempo music helps to create the atmosphere of a 'race' but it need not be a competition between groups. Having the time limit/race helps to avoid some of the awkwardness that some young people may feel to start writing about puberty changes. Most songs are around 3-4 minutes long and it gives a clear indication to students how long they have to complete the task. You may wish to offer to play the song again if the students need more time.

Share

7. Ask each group to share some of their answers (this is just initially to give students more ideas to add to their posters - not to work through every answer).

8. Draw attention to the different ways the puberty changes have been represented (i.e. symbols/words/drawings) and how students have represented that the changes happen mostly to boys, mostly to girls or usually everyone.

Teaching tip: Try to focus on the similarities in changes for boys and girls rather than the differences (most of the changes happen to all genders - getting taller and broader, becoming more independent, mood changes, etc).

9. Draw attention to any groups that have identified changes that are not just physical body changes (i.e. emotional and social changes).

10. Allow groups another 10-15 minutes to add to their posters. Encourage groups to add social and emotional changes if they have not done so already.

Physical, emotional, social

11. Collect posters and display so that all students can see them.

12. Explain :

"The changes we go through during puberty can be categorised into physical, emotional and social and relational/relationships."

13. Ask :

? What are physical changes? Can you give some examples?

(Physical changes are the changes that happen to the body. They are usually changes that we can see. E.g. getting taller, widening hips, growing breasts, etc)

? What are emotional changes? Can you give some examples?

(Emotional changes are to do with how we think and feel. E.g. mood swings, sexual feelings, etc).

? What are social/relationship changes? Can you give some examples?

(Social or relationship changes are to do with how we relate to our friends, families and other people in our lives. E.g. wanting more independence from our parents, changes in friendships, crushes, etc)

14. Demonstrate the Auslan sign for the words physical, emotional and social/relationship.

[Physical](#) (external site)

[Emotional](#) (external site)

[Social](#) or [Relationship](#) (external site)

15. Work through each of the different answers the students have contributed and ask the students to identify if the puberty change is physical, emotional, social/relational by indicating with the Auslan sign.

Possible answers - please see [Background teaching note: Puberty](#)

Teaching tip: If students need help to think of changes during puberty, you can provide them with copies of the free booklet [Puberty](#) during or prior to this activity.

Body diversity and reflection

16. Explain:

"Most of these changes will usually happen to everyone as they go through puberty. Some of the changes will happen mostly to boys (or people with a penis) and some will happen mostly to girls (or people with a vagina).

We say words like mostly and usually because everyone's body is different and there is a wide range of 'normal'. Everybody deserves to be treated with respect.

Puberty can be a challenging time for many people with all the changes that can take place. It is also a very exciting time with lots of positives."

17. Have a quiet moment of reflection to think about one thing you are looking forward to about puberty. This may be something you want to discuss with a trusted adult at some stage.

Question box

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18. Provide students with time to write questions for the question box.

19. If the question box is already set up, you may like to choose some questions related to the lesson to answer.

Health Promoting Schools

Background teacher note: [Health promoting schools framework](#).

Partnerships with parents

- [Talk Soon. Talk Often: a guide for parents talking to their kids about sex](#) is a free hardcopy resource that can be bulk ordered by schools and [website](#). Send a copy home to parents prior to starting your RSE program. The booklet offers ages and stage related information on puberty (and other topics) so that parents can reinforce the topics covered in class. ([How to order hard copies](#).) Provide the link to parents on school websites and social media.
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Partnerships with school staff

- Invite the school nurse to your class to answer some of the question box questions. This serves two purposes - they may be able to answer some of the questions you are unsure of and helps to build a relationships between the students and the nurse.
- The school nurse may like to take small groups of students requiring additional or specialised care to run separate activities with on this topic.