

## ***PUBERTY***

The changes that take place in the body of girls are a result of a long journey of several years from childhood to adulthood.

The body consists of several small parts called glands which gradually brings about bodily changes. These glands produce certain liquids called hormones that are sent into the bloodstream. One of these glands is called pituitary. This is a small gland located beneath the brain. It secretes several hormones, one of which affects our growth.

During puberty, the hormones from pituitary gland and sex glands are responsible for the development and maintenance of the primary and secondary sex characteristics in girls and boys.

These hormones affects the girls growth in following ways

- Rapid weight gain
- Hair growth on underarms and pubis (pubic hair)
- Changes in body shape - becomes curvier
- Hips and breasts becomes fuller

Some common questions / FAQ's

### 1) What exactly is meant by hormones

Hormone is a chemical substance produced by certain glands and are carried by blood to various organs by the body whose functions are influenced by it. They usually act as messengers and send messages from one part of the body to another. From adolescence onwards, these hormones are responsible for development, maturation and functioning of reproductive organs.

Following are the hormones affecting the female body

- a) Oestrogen - It is produced by Ovaries. It is responsible for development of primary and secondary female sex characteristics. The growth of the uterus, fallopian tubes, vagina, breasts, body hair, body shape, ovulation, menstruation, and delivery are caused by oestrogen.
- b) Progesterone - This is also produced by ovaries. It is responsible for regulating the menstrual cycle and also in the early stage of pregnancy.
- c) Prolactin - It is produced by pituitary glands. It stimulates milk production in the breast.

Each hormone has its own importance and contributes to the functioning of the reproductive organs.

## 2) Why do we have puberty?

It is a natural part of growing up! It marks the beginning of transition from child to adult.

## 3) Does Puberty hurt?

Puberty is not a painful process at all! It brings along with it certain changes. It can be scary and confusing though. You need to talk to a trusted adult.

## 4) At what age does puberty start

For girls, puberty usually happens earlier than for boys, between the ages of 9-13 years old. But this is only a range and girls might start earlier than their peers or later. Everyone eventually goes through puberty. Because each person is starting and experiencing these changes differently, it is important to be kind and respectful to others during this time.

## 5) Why am I going through this emotional turmoil!

Many people experience quick changes in emotions during puberty. One minute you feel happy. The next you may feel sad or angry. These changes are often referred to as "mood swings." Mood swings occur because of the hormones released during puberty. It is the emotional changes that come with puberty that cause mood swings. Mood swings are a normal part of puberty. Being aware of how your mood affects yourself and others is important. Learning to be aware of your emotions and how to control them is one of the biggest emotional developments in puberty. As this is a skill you're learning, and you might not be able to control your emotions 100% of the time.

Following might help you!

- Remember that you're not alone - Things always seem worse if you think you're the only one who feels bad or is dealing with challenges. Well, you're not. Even people who seem like they have it all together are probably struggling with the same feelings you are.
- Read about it - One of the best ways to get through tough times is to know exactly what you're going through. Read up on puberty or ask your doctor
- Depend on your friends - Talk about what you're feeling with your trusted friends. They may be feeling the same way, or they may know how to help you. At the very least, they might offer support and understanding, or just listen to you so you can get it all out.

- Talk to an adult. It can really help to talk to a parent or guardian who may remember what going through puberty feels like. School counselors and doctors can also listen to what you have to say and give you advice and support.
- Express yourself. If you like to write, draw, paint, sing, or play music -- you're lucky that you have these great outlets for letting your feelings out! You might be surprised by how good it feels to vent in some creative way.

#### 6) Why do men grow a beard and women don't?

It is all about hormones! As mentioned earlier, hormones act as messengers in the body. There are many different kinds of hormones. Each gives a different signal to the body. The hormones released during puberty are responsible for communicating the changes from child to adult. For males, there is just one: testosterone. In the male body, one of the messages that testosterone communicates is increased hair growth, including growing facial hair or beards.