



Ready... Set... Grow!

Expect Changes in Puberty

During puberty, children's bodies and emotions mature over a period of several years. Females usually begin puberty an average of two years before males. However, each person begins at their own unique time. This may be frustrating for children who begin puberty earlier or later than their friends.

These are some changes that children typically experience during puberty:

- Rapid growth in height and weight
- Mood swings
- Increased sweating
- Pimples or acne
- Growth of body hair
- Desire for independence
- Having a "crush" on someone
- Increasing need for privacy

As your child changes, your relationship will also change. You might be surprised at first when you are no longer allowed in the room when your child dresses or bathes. Little disagreements might crop up when you try to give advice on what to wear or how to do a task. Your child will want to make more choices without asking for help, but at other times, they might want more help than usual. Being a parent means learning and changing along with your child.

Read Resources for Parents and Families

- For tips on teaching your child about hygiene during puberty, visit <https://pubertycurriculum.com/personal-hygiene-habits-for-puberty/>

Get More Information

- Local library, bookstore, or reliable internet source
- Local public health department, healthcare provider, or school nurse



Practice New Hygiene Habits

Because of typical changes during puberty, your child will need to learn a few new hygiene habits. You can teach your child how to stay clean and healthy. Be sure to talk about these expected changes:

- Increased sweating
- Increased body odor
- Increased oil gland production
- Pimples or acne
- Body hair growth

Your child will want to bathe, use deodorant, and change their clothes and bed sheets more often once puberty begins. These new habits will become more automatic in time. Until then, your reminders might be needed.



Prepare for the Future

Your child is learning that most of the changes in puberty are caused by the reproductive system as it prepares itself for adulthood and possible future parenthood. Females begin releasing eggs and menstruating. Males begin producing sperm and having nocturnal emissions. These are signs that bodies are able to get pregnant or cause a pregnancy. However, young people have a lot more growing up to do before they are ready for the life-long commitment to parenthood.

Childhood is a time to grow up emotionally, learn how to form healthy relationships, and get an education. Most importantly, it's a time for children to enjoy childhood while they can and reach for their goals for the future.

You can help your child focus on their goals and understand parenthood:

- Encourage your child to set goals for their future.
- Talk about the joys and responsibilities of parenthood.
- Discuss how parenthood might impact their future goals and dreams.
- Talk about your family rules and how you expect your child to behave in friendships and romantic relationships.
- Monitor your child's activities and friendships to avoid situations where early sexual activity could happen.
- Encourage your child not to "date," "hook up," have a "boyfriend or girlfriend," or "go steady" until they are older.