

Physical Changes during Puberty in a Girl



As one grows older, many physical changes take place in the body. These changes occur rapid between the age of 10 and 11 years. The common changes that are seen among girls are listed below.

	Change	
Skin	The skin becomes oily, which causes pimples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This normally happens during puberty and then automatically clears up• This is because of the hormonal changes in the body• This does not happen because of eating oily food or thinking about sex
Hair	Hair starts growing in the underarms and genital areas.	The rate and amount of hair growth is different for all girls.
Breasts	The breasts grow larger in size.	In the beginning, the size of the two breasts may vary but gradually becomes equal.
Body size	The pelvic (hip) bones become wider and the breasts increase in size. There is an increase in height and weight.	A young girl's height depends on the parent's height and a nutritious diet.



Genitals and reproductive organs

- Growth of hair on the genitals
- The area around the genitals becomes darker
- Growth of the internal organs
- Start of menstruation
- A white discharge from the vagina

All these are signs of hormonal changes taking place in the girl's body. These indicate that the ovaries are now producing ova and the girl can get pregnant.

Some Important Information About Menstruation

12 year old Paro lives in a *basti*. For the past few days, Paro has not been able to concentrate on her studies and chores and has lost interest in playing. She feels that the adults' behavior towards her is different. She is also noticing some physical changes in her body. Her breasts have started growing and she has noticed hair growing in her underarms and on her genitals. Her friends were also undergoing the same changes and they used to discuss these changes amongst themselves. One day they decided to go and speak to their teacher, Anita about the changes.



Paro: Ma'am we have a lot of questions, can we discuss them with you?

Teacher: Yes, sure.



Paro: Why do we get periods? Is this normal?

Teacher: It is normal to have periods. It is a sign that you are growing up.



Rupa: Are periods dirty?

Teacher: Periods are not 'dirty' or 'impure'. This is very normal. There is no need to isolate yourself or change your diet during this period. It is necessary to keep yourself clean and bathe regularly.



Yasmin: When one is bleeding during menstruation, what should one do?

Teacher: Make a pad out of a soft clean cloth and use it when you are bleeding. When the pad is soaked, replace it with a fresh one. Wash the used pads and dry them in the sun. Keep the pads in a bag so that they can be used again. You can also use ready made pads, which can be bought from the market. Throw these pads in the dust bin after they have been used.



Rupa: How many times should the cloth or sanitary pad be changed?

Teacher: Pads usually need to be changed 3-5 times in a day. But, each girl should decide according to her bleeding. Some have heavier bleeding and need to change more often and some who have a lighter bleeding may need to change only once or twice in the day. Always wash your genitals after passing urine and after changing a pad. This prevents problems like itching and infections.



Paro: During the periods, why does one get pain in the lower abdomen?

Teacher: The pain is nothing to worry about. When the egg from the ovary is not fertilized, the uterus sheds its lining by contracting and expanding the muscles. This contraction and expansion of muscles causes pain.



Yasmin: Does everyone get periods at the same age?

Teacher: No. Some girls start their periods very early at the age of 10 or 11 years. Some girls have to wait till they are 16 years old. If your periods do not start by the time you are 16 years, you should consult a doctor.



Paro: Why are the periods irregular? Some times they come early and sometimes late. Sometimes the duration is longer and sometimes shorter. Why is that?

Teacher: Normally the periods are irregular in the first year. This is because the periods are a new phenomenon for the body and it takes a while to get used to them. Irregular periods can also be caused by obesity, anemia, weakness, TB or a long illness. Mental tension can also affect the periods.





Jaya: What is the white discharge from the vagina?

Teacher: Like the mouth, nose, eyes and ears are moist; the vagina also produces a liquid which protects it from infections and mild trauma. This discharge is usually a white liquid, which sometimes is thick or milky in color. A change in the color or smell of the discharge, along with itching in the vagina and pain in the lower back may be a sign of reproductive tract infection.



Paro: How can we prevent reproductive tract infections?

Teacher: We need to take care of a number of things like:

- Bathing regularly
- Washing the genitals with soap, while bathing
- Washing the genitals front to back after passing urine or defecating
- Do not use another person's towel or underwear.



If despite these measures, you get an infection, go to a doctor for treatment, not a quack.

If you have any more questions or doubts, write them down and discuss them with your teacher.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Physical Changes during Puberty in Boys

As one grows older, many physical changes take place in the body. These changes occur rapid between the age of 12 and 13 years. The common changes that are seen among boys are listed below.



	Changes	
Skin	The skin becomes oily, which sometimes causes pimples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This normally happens until adolescence and then automatically clears up• This is because of the hormonal changes in the body• This does not happen because of eating oily food or thinking about sex
Hair	The boys start growing facial hair, hair on the chest, arms and legs, between the legs and in the underarms.	The amount of hair growth varies for all the boys.
Chest	Sometimes boys also develop breasts, which later subside on their own.	
Body size	The shoulders and chest become broader. There is an increase in both the height and weight.	A young boy's height depends on the parent's height and a nutritious diet.
Voice	The voice starts breaking and then becomes gruffer.	These changes occur because the larynx becomes bigger.
Genitals	Hair growth on the penis. The penis and the testicles become bigger and change shape. The area around them becomes darker.	Penile tension and nocturnal emissions are natural phenomena in boys. They signify the maturing of the boy's sexual organs. These do not need treatment.



Some More Information About Your Body is Given Below

1. Are shorter boys less masculine?



No, height does not affect your capabilities. A boy's height does not reflect his inner strength. A person's importance does not depend on his height or looks, but his personality and behavior.



2. If a boy's moustaches start growing at the age of 14 years, is there a problem?



All boys do not mature at the same age. Some boys mature earlier and some later. So it is nothing to worry about.



3. What are wet dreams? Do they make a person weak?



Wet dreams are also called nocturnal emissions. Sometimes at night, the penis becomes hard and the tension is released by automatic ejaculation. This is a normal phenomenon and not an illness. This does not need treatment and does not cause any weakness.



4. Is masturbation harmful?



No, it is not harmful and is a natural thing to do. However, it is recommended that you use your energy in more fruitful activities like games, music, dance etc.



5. How does one look after one's genitals?



You can look after your genitals in the following ways:

- Clean your penis with soap and water everyday while bathing
- After urinating, lightly jerk the penis and remove the last one or two drops of urine
- If your underwear gets wet, change it immediately
- Do not use any other person's towel or underwear.



6. How does one clean inside the penis?



A white substance forms and collects under the foreskin. This can cause difficulty in pushing the foreskin back and can also cause infections. Gently push the foreskin back and clean regularly with water.



If you have any more questions or doubts, write them down and discuss them with your teacher.