What’s happening to my baby?
Puberty and Sexuality

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Outline

1. Physical stages of puberty
2. Puberty pitfalls
3. Psychological stages of puberty
4. Sexuality
5. Body Image
6. Take home points
7. Resources
Anticipatory Guidance and Reassurance

- Puberty brings on physical and emotional changes that can be scary for kids
- Kids do better if they know what to expect and if they are reassured that things are normal
• begin short, casual discussions about body changes that occur in puberty with kids by the age of 7 or 8
• offer reading materials to avoid any awkwardness of the discussions!
• then offer children opportunities to ask questions or to discuss issues that may arise from their reading
• **Reading materials do not replace parents’ wisdom, experience or support**
What is puberty?

a) A roller coaster for parents
b) A roller coaster for youth
c) The period of time marked by maturing of the genital organs, development of secondary sex characteristics
d) A process that most adolescents navigate through intact and unharmed
Physical Changes

- Puberty is initiated by hormonal changes triggered by a part of the brain called the hypothalamus.
- These changes begin about a year before any of their results are visible.

![Diagram of the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis](image)
Boys vs Girls

- Boys usually begin signs of puberty between 10 and 14 years old
- Usually takes 5 to 6 years to get through all stages
- Girls usually begin signs of puberty between 8 and 13 years old
- Usually takes 3 to 5 years to get through all stages
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puberty Stages</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>No obvious physical signs</td>
<td>No obvious physical signs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Stage 2        | **Testes enlarge** (avg age 11.5)  
                    Body Odour | **Breast budding** (avg age 10.5)  
                    Body Odour  
                    First pubic hair  
                    **Height growth spurt** |
| Stage 3        | Penis enlarges  
                    Pubic hair starts growing  
                    **Ejaculations** (wet dreams) | Breasts enlarge  
                    Pubic hair darkens, curlier  
                    Vaginal discharge |
| Stage 4        | Continued enlargement of testes and penis  
                    Penis/scrotal sac darken in colour  
                    Pubic hair curlier, coarser  
                    **Voice changes**  
                    **Height growth spurt**  
                    Male breast development  
                    **Facial hair** (upper lip) | Menstruation (avg 12.5 yo)  
                    Nipple distinct from areola |
| Stage 5        | Fully mature | Fully mature |
**Tanner Stages - females**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Tanner I: preadolescent breast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Tanner II: breast tissue development with onset of areolar enlargement sparse longitudinal labial pubic hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Tanner III: increase in breast tissue volume and areolar enlargement coarser and curlier pubic hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Tanner IV: adult breast shape and elevation of the nipple thickening and broader distribution of pubic hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Tanner V: mature adult breast shape and contour adult pubic hair character and distribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tanner Stages - males

Tanner I: preadolescent

Tanner II: testicular enlargement and thinning of scrotal skin

Tanner III: penile enlargement and continued increase in testicular size

Tanner IV: further testicular/penile enlargement and appearance of pubic hair

Tanner V: adult testicular/penile size and pubic hair distribution
Go see your doctor if.....

Precocious/Early Puberty
- Girl – breast development before age 8
- Boy – testicular enlargement before age 9

Delayed Puberty
- Girl – no breast development by age 13 or no menstrual period by age 16
- Boy – no testicular enlargement by age 14
• an earlier age of pubertal onset of 4.9 months has been seen from 1960s vs now
• may be partially due to excessive weight gain
• speculation regarding the possible role of cattle and poultry feed/hormone supplementation also exists (not very scientifically sound studies)
• Different racial groups also demonstrate different times for the onset of puberty (African-American girls at 8.9 years of age vs. Caucasian girls at 10 years of age)
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Puberty Pitfalls

*Weight/Body Shape:*

- Girls (and boys) usually gain weight around the belly at the start of puberty before they start to grow taller.
- For girls, development of a rounded belly is her energy store for puberty.
- 1/3 of boys can have breast development that will resolve on its own.
• for boys, there is a reduction of fat mass then development of muscle mass
• for girls, the majority of weight gain is due to fat accumulation (commonly distributed in the breasts, upper arms, back, and thighs)
Hygiene:
• talk to kids about proper hygiene at the onset and during puberty
• during puberty, the body produces more perspiration because sweat glands become more active
• more perspiration means body odor
• daily bathing and/or showering are enough to control body odor, along with deodorants and antiperspirants
• Boys should wash the genital area every day with water and mild soap
• In girls, vaginal discharge is a necessary part of the body's regular functioning
• Normal discharge (usually clear to white) is part of the body's self-cleaning process - as discharge leaves the body, it takes bacteria with it
• Girls should clean the vaginal area with a mild soap and water
Bone growth:
• In females, about 50% of lifetime total body calcium is deposited into bones during puberty (most is during the first 1/2 of puberty)
• In males, 50%-65% of lifetime total body calcium is laid down in puberty
• The importance of calcium intake via dairy products and other sources to maximize bone density must be underscored to teenagers
**Anemia:**
- Occurs commonly in girls who have started their menstrual periods
- 10% of menstruating girls between 12-15 years of age are iron deficient

**Male gynecomastia:**
- Resolves on own (6 to 18 months), reassurance
- 50% of boys will experience either one-sided or bilateral breast tissue swelling during puberty (average age is 13 years)
Musculoskeletal injuries:
- Joints, muscles and bones are maturing at different rates and can lead to more injuries
- This age can bring on an increased intensity and level of sport

Myopia (nearsightedness):
- Because of asymmetric growth of the globe of the eye during puberty, many teens discover the need for corrective lenses
Acne:
• Can cause significant distress about appearance
• **Take it seriously**, try over the counter products, see doctor

Scoliosis:
• more common in females (happens because of accelerated growth during puberty)
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Psychological changes during puberty and early adolescence

- the emergence of abstract thinking
- the growing ability of absorbing the perspectives or viewpoints of others
- an increased ability of introspection
- the development of personal and sexual identity
- the establishment of a system of values
- increasing autonomy from family and more personal independence
- greater importance of peer relationships
- the emergence of skills and coping strategies to overcome problems and crises
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Sexuality

- During puberty, young people start to develop their sexual identity.
- Sexual identity is a person's feelings of and about their own maleness or femaleness (gender) and the ways in which they express these feelings (whether heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual).
- The best thing that parents can do is listen.
- Don’t judge, be supportive.
• Sexual feelings begin at different ages for different kids
• TV and media can affect how teens feel they should act and look
• Have conversations about the effects of media with your kids
• At a time when fitting in with peers can feel like the most important thing to your child, make sure that you have an open dialogue
• Talking to your kids about sex does not mean that you approve of your kids having sex, and does not mean that they will then go out and do it!
• Average age Canadian males and females have sex for the first time 16.5 years
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Body Image

- Body image is how someone feels about his or her own physical appearance
- Self-esteem is how much people value themselves, the pride they feel in themselves, and how worthwhile they feel
- Some kids struggle with self-esteem when they start puberty because the body goes through many changes
- The physical changes, combined with a natural desire to feel accepted, mean it can be tempting for people to compare themselves with others
- They may compare themselves with the people around them or with actors and celebs they see on TV, in movies, or in magazines
• Some kids think they need to change how they look or act to feel good about themselves. But actually all you need to do is change the way you see your body and how you think about yourself.
How to help body image

• Compliment your child on things other than looks, especially important for fathers and daughters
• Ask schools to teach about media literacy (ie. How media can promote racism, sexism, looksism, homophobia)
• Expose him/her to accomplished women who are successful for their achievements (many role models available to girls are pop stars, actresses and models—women who have become famous at least partly because of their looks)
• Prioritize meals in your home - Try and eat at least one meal a day together as a family, without the television
• Prioritize daily exercise, emphasizing physical activity as essential to good health, not as a vehicle to look thin
• Avoid negative talk about body shape and looks
• Avoid categorizing and labeling foods (e.g. good/bad or safe/dangerous). All foods can be eaten in moderation.
• Be a good role model in regard to sensible eating, exercise, and self-acceptance
Media Literacy
Take Home Points

1. You will survive puberty
2. Your child will survive puberty
3. Kids do better when they know what to expect
4. Be approachable
5. These ages are actually a wonderful time to start to get a glimpse of the individual your child is becoming – enjoy it!
Resources

- www.sexualityandu.ca - Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology of Canada
- Sex Information and Education Council of Canada - www.sieccan.org/
- www.aboutkidshealth.ca/ - Sick Kids website
- Please take a look at the books I brought today as examples (books are still cool!)
Book List

• "What's Happening to my body" Book for girls, by Lynda Madaras
• “What’s Happening to my body” Book for boys, by Lynda Madaras
• Girl's Guide to becoming a teen, by American Medical Association
• Boy's Guide to becoming a teen, by American Medical Association
• The Girl's body book, by Kelli Dunham
• The Boy's body book, by Kelli Dunham
• The Care and Keeping of You (body book for girls), by Valorie Lee Schaefer - this one is sponsored by American Girl