

LET'S TALK

# Body Changes

WITH OUR KIDS!



PERSONAL WELLNESS 6-9  
HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
STRAND

## Puberty

**REASSURE YOUR YOUTH ABOUT THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHANGES THEY ARE EXPERIENCING.**

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Some youth become anxious about the changes happening to their bodies.

### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- Use correct names for body parts to enhance a child's body image and self-confidence while making them less vulnerable to sexual abuse.
- Assist your child in learning acceptable ways to manage emotions.
- Work with them to develop coping skills.
- Regular face washing can help lessen the appearance of acne.
- Discuss good hygiene, such as, washing and changing clothes daily.

**EXPLAIN THAT MENSTRUATION GENERALLY BEGINS FOR FEMALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 15 YEARS OLD.**

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This will support your child's understanding of this natural process.

### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- Explain that menstruation occurs monthly and may not be regular in the beginning.
- Talk with your child about how to access and properly use menstrual hygiene products.
- Read labels for age-appropriate products.
- Help your child make a first period kit to have in their backpack.

**REASSURE YOUR CHILD THAT EVERYONE GROWS AT THEIR OWN RATE. IT IS NOT A RACE!**

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Encouraging your child to love their own bodies will help them to see that everyone is different.

### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- Discuss that breasts may develop unevenly and may be sensitive and sore.
- Explain that some males develop breast tissue that usually disappears as they grow.
- Discuss that testicles grow at a faster rate than the penis and can be uneven.
- Discuss that penises may be circumcised or not and are different sizes. Size does not affect function.
- Discourage comparisons with other children the same age.

**DISCUSS NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS (WET DREAMS) AND MASTURBATION.**

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Your child may need support understanding hormonal changes.

### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- Reassure your child that this is natural.
- Explain that this is another way that the body prepares for adulthood.
- Some children will engage in masturbation.
- Discuss the importance of privacy while masturbating.
- The books "It's Perfectly Normal" and "Sex is a Funny Word" are available in the Guidance Office.

# Reproduction and Contraception

## EXPLORE THE REALITIES OF TEEN PREGNANCY AND PARENTING.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Teens need to understand the impact a pregnancy can have on their social lives, school, work and finances.

### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- Be honest about concerns for the health of a young parent and baby due to a higher rate of complications. ([Adolescent pregnancy \(WHO\)](#))
- Talk about what daily life would be like in terms of education, career opportunities and increased risk of complications for the baby. ([NB Health Indicators, Issue 9, July 2013](#))

## ASK QUESTIONS TO FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD ALREADY KNOWS ABOUT REPRODUCTION.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Youth are very curious about where babies come from.

### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- Have open discussions
- These resources are available:
  - [Conception and Pregnancy](#)
  - [Fetal Development](#)
  - [teachingsexualhealth.ca](#)
  - [Sex & U](#)

## ALLOW THE CONVERSATIONS TO EVOLVE FROM WHERE BABIES COME FROM TO UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVE TYPES OF CONTRACEPTION.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Long before they become sexually active, teens should understand the different types of contraception, their effectiveness and how to access them.

### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

- Foster an open and ongoing dialogue about sexual health topics to help your child feel comfortable asking you for help.
- Encourage your child to speak with a trusted adult at school or in the community if they have questions.
- Talk about the importance of using condoms in addition to other forms of contraception to prevent sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections and pregnancy.
- Schools provide research based information and discuss how it relates to human rights.
- A useful resource: [Birth Control Learning Tool](#).

## Parents and guardians are health educators by:

- Supporting youth in making life decisions
- Understanding how their children learn
- Sharing values, beliefs, and expectations
- Being role models for social interactions

### CONSIDER HOW TO HANDLE POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS

- Will I answer appropriately?
- Will I tell them too much too young?
- Do I have accurate information?

### GRADES 3-5

Students learn basic information on conception and pregnancy

### GRADES 6-8

Students learn in more detail about preconception, fertilization, gestation and childbirth

