

## Precocious puberty and Delayed puberty

Puberty takes place at a different pace among boys and girls of the same age. Puberty taking place earlier than the normal age range is called precocious puberty. While the opposite is called delayed puberty. The onset of puberty is affected by factors such as genes, nutrition, climate and exercise. Seek medical advice if you have queries.

### Girls ♀

	Normal Puberty	Signs of Precocious Puberty	Signs of Delayed Puberty
Breast Development	Between the age of 7 and 12, elevation of nipple followed by gradual enlargement of the nipple, areola and breast	Breast development starts before the age of 7	Lack of breast development by the age of 13 years
Appearance of Pubic Hair	Between the age of 9 and 14, appearance of pubic hair follows breast development		
Menarche	Between the age of 10 and 15	Menarche starts before the age of 10	Absence of menarche by the age of 15 years

### Boys ♂

	Normal Puberty	Signs of Precocious Puberty	Signs of Delayed Puberty
External Genitalia Development	Between the age of 9 and 14, testicular enlargement and increase in penile size. Scrotum becomes larger with darkened skin	Development of external genitalia starts before the age of 9	Lack of testicular enlargement by the age of 14 years
Appearance of Pubic Hair	Between the age of 10 and 14		

### Psychological changes

Apart from physical changes, children also face great psychological changes. They may feel overly sensitive to what others say or get upset easily. They want to be independent, worship idols and care about peer recognition and acceptance. Sometimes they may have complete confidence and feel very happy, but sometimes they may regard oneself as inferior and feel depressed.



### Suggestion to parents

When children are facing puberty, parents should show their concern to children, be considerate, receptive and supportive, listen to them and share experience with them. When they have problems, help them to face and allay their fear and queries, so that they can go through the stage of puberty happily.

# Puberty

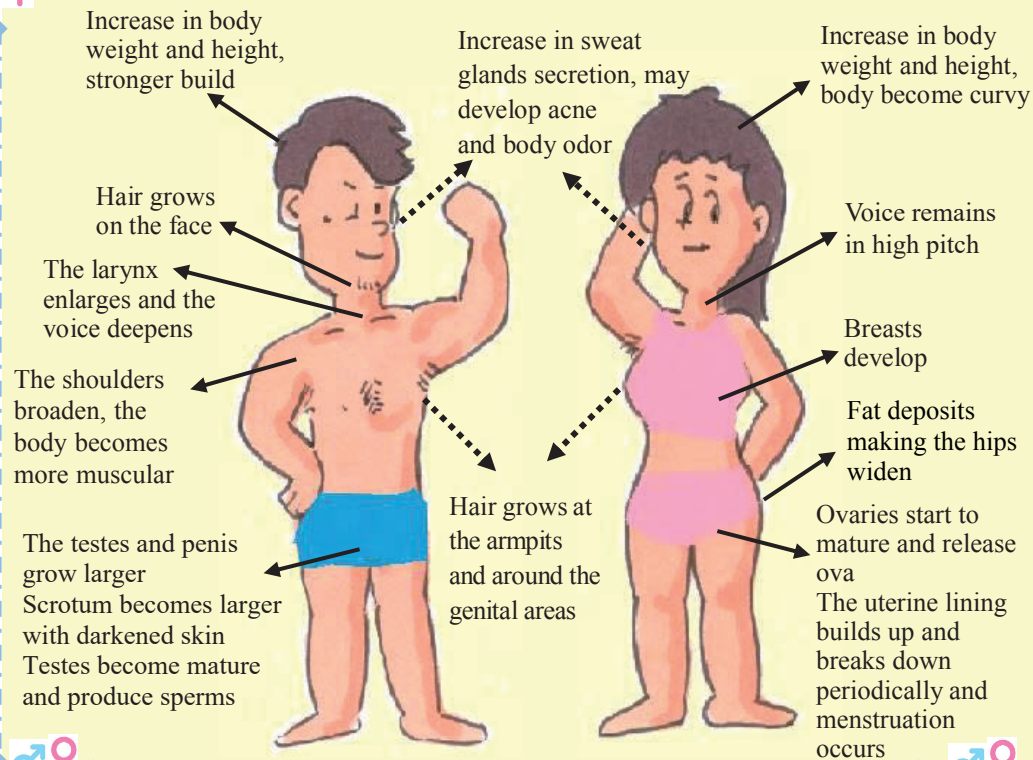
## Parents



Parents understand that children have to go through the stage of puberty and face great physical and psychological changes in order to mature into adulthood. How can parents help their children to go through puberty? If you want to know the answer, you should understand the changes children encounter during puberty. Puberty is a stage from children to adulthood, beginning around the age of 10 and ends around 20. The most apparent changes in puberty are body growth, physiological maturation and reproductive ability. Psychological changes are also great. Puberty in girls usually occurs between the age of 7 and 12, while in boys between the age of 9 and 14. The onset of puberty varies among individuals, some may start earlier and some may begin later. No matter puberty starts early or late, most children will reach maturity eventually when it occurs.

### Physiological changes

When puberty starts, hormones in the body increase to stimulate a series of physiological changes. The body grows rapidly and the secondary sex characteristics develop. Marked differences in physical features between boys and girls are noticed.



### Breast development

The size of breasts differs between girls. The age of breast development also varies and usually begins between the age of 7 and 12. It is common to see most girls have one of the breasts developing before the other. However, if you notice the other breast does not develop long after the first, seek advice from a doctor.

### Menstruation

Most girls get their first menstruation between the age of 10 and 15. After the onset of puberty, the reproductive system is influenced by hormonal changes. An egg starts to be released periodically. At the same time, hormones stimulate the uterus to build up its lining with engorged blood vessels and this thickens the walls of uterus. If the egg is fertilized by a sperm cell, the fertilized egg implants in the wall of the uterus and develops into a fetus.

If the egg is not fertilized, the uterine wall stops thickening and sheds the extra tissue lining. Blood, residual cells and mucus go out of the body through the vagina, forming menstruation which lasts for 3 to 7 days.

Irregular period for the first 2 to 3 years is common in girls who just start menstruation due to the immature reproductive system. Each menstrual cycle can be as short as 2 to 3 weeks or sometimes as long as a few months. Parents may teach their daughters to keep a record of menstrual period for continual observation.

### Wet dream

When boys enter puberty, their testicles start to produce sperms in large quantities. The inhibition of our central nervous system is relaxed during sleep. The sperms will be ejected when the penis is stimulated by body turning, pressure from tight underwear/ beddings, or having sex dreams. This is called wet dream. Wet dreams are normal for teenage boys and are not harmful to health. Do not worry about it too much. The onset of wet dreams differs from person to person as the onset of puberty varies. Some may never experience it while others may have it once a month or up to two or three times a week. If wet dreams happen too often, you may try the following preventive measures:

- Sleep on your side
- Use comfortable beddings and wear loose underwear during sleep to prevent pressure on the genitals
- Do not drink alcohol and avoid overeating before going to bed
- Remember to empty your bladder before sleep
- Try not to browse porn magazines or watch porn movies

