

Physical changes during Puberty

Lesson 2

Grades
4th & 5th

The five stages of puberty

In this lesson we will explore the five developmental stages girls experience during puberty and the hormonal changes that trigger these different stages.

Materials needed: journals, 3x5 cards, mailbox, List of 'what they know' from first lesson, overhead transparencies of glands, ovaries and Fallopian tubes, and breast and pubic hair development.

Today you will need your journals, question cards, and the packets I handed out during the last lesson.

Side Note: Give them a bit of time to get out their things. Make sure you have a few extra copies of the Petite Amie Pamphlet — Changes During Puberty — Physical, on hand in case someone forgot theirs.

I'd like you to open your journals to a clean page. Put the date in the top right hand corner (or however you have your students head their papers). **I want you to write "When I talked to my parents about my puberty packet..." What happened? I am going to give you 3 minutes to write all you remember about the conversation you had with them. Think about what you said, what they said, how you felt, how it seemed they felt about talking to you about this topic. Were you embarrassed? Were they? Did you look at it separately? Or together? Were they open to answering any questions you had about the packet? Anything you can remember, I want you to write about. If any questions came up that didn't get answered, write them down, so you won't forget them when it is time to write on the question cards. Remember, I want you to keep writing for the entire 3 minutes. Go.**

Side Note: Give the girls 3 minutes to write. While they are writing create five columns on the board (or a piece of chart paper) at the front of the class – headings should be Stage 1/Stage 2/ Stage 3/ Stage 4/ Stage 5. At the end of 3 minutes, tell them to finish the sentence they are writing and put their pencils down.

If you have more to write, you can finish at the end of this session. Leave space in your journal if you think you'll need it.

Does anyone want to share what you've written?

Side Note: Try to get at least five girls to read to you from their journals. Encourage girls to speak that may come from different backgrounds or have had different experiences with their parents based on your knowledge of them.

You may get comments such as:

- ◆ **My Parents were really nervous to talk about this stuff**
- ◆ **My parents wanted to talk about too much private stuff**
- ◆ **My Dad read the packet by himself and then just asked me if I had any questions. I said no. That was our whole conversation.**
- ◆ **We had to talk about it with my whole family over dinner. It was awful!**
- ◆ **My mom wants to come in and watch while we have these lessons. Is that okay?**
- ◆ **It was cool! My mom and I have a date to go shopping next week. I'm not quite sure what all we're gonna get, but I get to choose the restaurant where we have lunch!**
- ◆ **My parents say they're gonna teach me this stuff and you're not supposed to. They want me to go to the library when the class is learning about puberty.**

Side Note: As they tell you what they wrote, you'll want to address how their conversations went. Tell them many parents are nervous to talk about puberty because it means their little girls are growing up. This may cause them to clam up, or it may cause them to start talking and never stop. It's all totally normal.

Be aware that some parents will have issue with puberty being taught in school and may want to observe or even pull their daughters out of class. This is common. If you feel comfortable having parents in the classroom, invite parents in. You can always use their help with passing out journals and taking notes on the board. Pulling in parents during these talks will help them to be more comfortable and more likely to talk to their daughters openly about these topics. But also evaluate your class. If you feel your students will be inhibited by having a parent in the classroom during these discussions, talk to the parents who want to observe about this. Hopefully they will understand your intentions are to do what is best for your class.

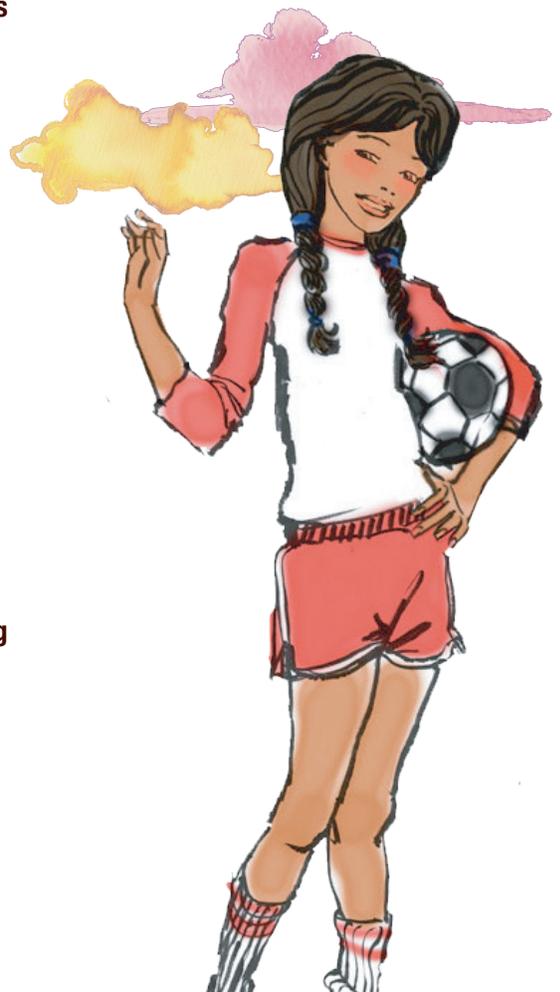
Today we will be taking about the five stages of puberty and what leads up to them. Although all girls go through the same stages, in pretty much the same order, they may or may not go through them at the same age or pace. This is important to remember. Your best friend may begin puberty before you, but you will catch up, don't worry.

Your brain knows when your body is getting close to puberty and tells your glands to send out chemical signals called hormones to different parts of your body. Hormones are like little tiny messengers running around your body telling the different parts to start doing their jobs.

(Project an overhead diagram of glands in the body sending out messages to the parts of the body affected during puberty – sex organs, armpits, pubic area, breasts, face, etc)

Different hormones, coming from different glands are responsible for all the changes occurring in your body. One of the first glands to jump to action is the pituitary gland, which is located just under your brain. It sends out hormones that act on your reproductive organs. These hormones wake up your ovaries telling them it's time to start producing the female hormones called estrogen and progesterone.

Growth hormones are also jump started during puberty — they make



the body grow sometimes very quickly. Some girls can even grow four inches in one year during what's known as a "growth spurt". At this phase some girls may even be taller than most boys of the same age. When this passes, you'll be close to your adult height. As you grow taller, your body will change in other ways, too. You'll gain a little weight and your overall shape will change. These changes all mark the normal development that happens during puberty.

Now, up on the board, I have five columns. During our last lesson we did some brainstorming about what puberty is. Some of you mentioned some of the things that happen to your body during puberty. Let's take a look at that list again. (Hang up the list from the last lesson) **Between this list and your packet, which you read for homework, I'd like you to help me fill in the columns with what happens in each stage.**

I also want you to copy into your journals the five stages of puberty. This will be on the quiz. But more importantly, I want you to have an idea of what you will notice happening to your own bodies in the next few years.

The first stage of puberty occurs between the ages of 8 and 11. Yes, you can start puberty as early as 8 years old. During this first stage, the changes that happen are all internal, or inside, your body. No one will be able to see them, not even you. Anybody want to guess what happens? (Take a few answers) First of all, you will start producing hormones that will tell your sexual reproductive organs to start maturing. Does anyone know what sexual or reproductive organs are?

Side Note: Take some brainstorming answers. Don't let them struggle too long.

Reproductive organs, sometimes called Sexual organs, are any part of your body that makes you a woman and not a man. The internal reproductive organs that begin to mature and grow in the first stage of puberty are your ovaries and fallopian tubes (Put up an overhead diagram of the ovaries and fallopian tubes).

So what do you have written down that happens in the first stage of puberty?

Side Note: Answers might be:

- ◆ You can be 8
- ◆ We started already
- ◆ Stuff inside your body, nothing outside that anyone can see
- ◆ Your organs get bigger



You are all right. But, I want you to be comfortable with is saying out loud what we are learning, so I want you all to say with me "sexual or reproductive organs". One more time "sexual organs."

Side Note: Give them some giggle time. But keep it up until they are bored with it and you see they are comfortable with saying it. The more they are comfortable saying the terms, the more likely they are to ask questions and talk about puberty.

The second stage of puberty will happen between the ages of 8 and 14. But on average, you will be 11 or 12 when you go through stage 2. This is when you will start showing outward signs of puberty. Anybody know what happens?

This is the stage when most girls have their initial growth spurt. Remember the one where you could grow up to 4 inches? Your arms and legs can grow really fast, maybe faster than the rest of your body. You might even hear your parents say that your feet are growing so fast that the can barely keep you in a pair of shoes that fits. But don't worry; the rest of you will catch up.



Also during the second stage of puberty, your breasts may start to grow. You will probably also begin to notice that you are growing pubic hair.

Side Note: Put up overhead of breast and pubic hair development. This will most likely require more giggle time.

Now to your favorite part. Words out loud again! Repeat after me, “sexual reproductive organs.” “breasts” “pubic hair”

Side Note: Just do it as many times as you feel are necessary. Make sure everyone is saying the terms out loud.

Okay, now that we have that out of the way, what do you have written down in your journal about stage 2 of puberty?

Side Note: Answers might be:

- ◆ Can happen between 8 and 14
- ◆ You get boobs
- ◆ You grow tall
- ◆ Your legs and arms might get super long
- ◆ You get hair down there.

Try to encourage the girls to use the correct terms for body parts.

Awesome! You guys are right on! Now, onto the third stage. This will happen between ages 8 and 15, but usually around 12 or 13. Anybody want to guess?

Well, mostly everything from stage 2 continues. Your breasts continue to grow and your pubic hair grows in thicker and darker. But, what is most important is that your vagina may begin to produce a clear or whitish fluid, called vaginal discharge. You may notice it in your underpants. This is totally normal. It means your period is not far off. And in fact, many girls get their first menstrual period and start ovulating during this stage of puberty. Ovulation is part of your menstrual cycle and is the release of an egg from your ovary each month.

But remember, all girls mature at their own pace, so you could be 9 when you start your period, or you could be 16, or anywhere in between. It’s all normal.

Ready to repeat after me, girls? “sexual reproductive organs” “breasts” “pubic hair” “vagina” “menstrual period”. Great job!

What do you all have down for the third stage of puberty?

Side Note: Answers should include:

- ◆ Happens between 9 and 15
- ◆ Usually happens at 12 or 13
- ◆ You get thicker pubic hair
- ◆ Your boobs get bigger
- ◆ Your vagina produces a clear or whitish discharge
- ◆ You might get your period



Make sure you are copying all of these points down on the charts you put up at the beginning of the lesson.

Okay, onto Stage 4. On average, this stage happens to girls around 13 or 14. But it can occur anywhere from age 10 to age 16. Again, like stage three, a lot of the changes that started before will continue. Your breasts and pubic hair continue to develop. Hair under your arms will usually start growing in this stage. If you didn't get your period and begin ovulating in Stage 3, it will likely occur during this stage.

Anyone want to guess what is next? Right. Stage 5. The last stage of puberty. This is where it all ends. In this stage you will physically be a woman. You will finish growing. You'll reach your adult height, your breasts are fully mature and ovulation and your periods are pretty well established.

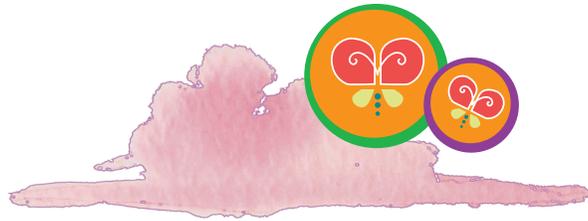
Deep breath. Almost all done. What are the main points to remember for Stages 4 and 5?

Side Note: They should include for Stage 4:

- ◆ **Hair keeps growing**
- ◆ **Breasts keep growing. Happens between ages 10 and 16**
- ◆ **You get your period**
- ◆ **Ovulation begins**

For stage 5:

- ◆ **You finish growing**
- ◆ **You are physically a woman**
- ◆ **Ovulation is regular**
- ◆ **Periods are regular**



If you have all those changes written down, you're set. And guess what? I'm not going to make you repeat after me again. You've done it enough. I just want you to be comfortable with the words. So if or when you have questions, being embarrassed to say the words won't stop you from asking.

That's a lot for one day

I want you to take 5 minutes and write in your journal. Write about what you learned, how you felt, or if you want, finish up writing about your conversation with your parents. I am also going to come around and pass out 3 x 5 cards. If you have a question, write it down, and put it in the box, if you don't, put a blank card in. And if you have any questions you wrote down in your journal yesterday, write that on a card and put it in the box.

Side Note: Make sure everyone puts a card in the mailbox. There will be peeking to see who put something in and who didn't. When it reaches the last student, ask her to bring you the box. Look through the questions and choose any that you think are relevant to today's discussion.

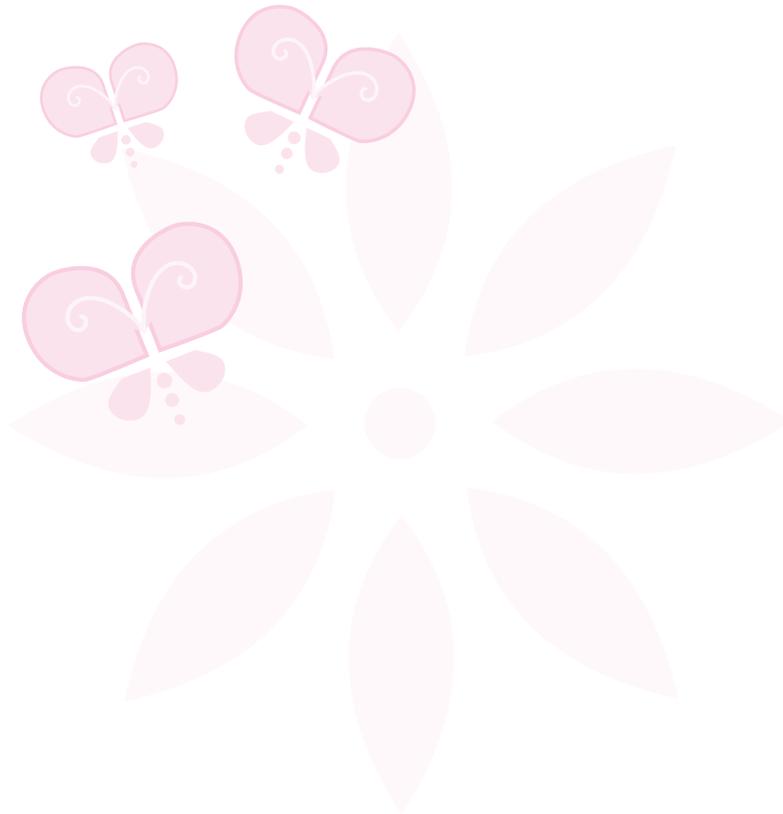
It's been 5 minutes, finish up what you are writing. Does anyone want to share with the class what you wrote?

Side Note: Let 3 or 4 girls speak. Then move on to their questions.

Make sure you give basic answers to all of the questions. Let the girls know that you will be talking more in depth about these topics in the next few days. If you feel comfortable answering questions about yourself, do so. But if you don't, just shuffle them in with the 'no question' cards.

The girls may begin to raise their hands to get other questions answered that have been raised by those from the mailbox. Answer a few of them if you have time.

I see that some of you have more questions to ask. Write these questions down in your journal or on your question cards. You can put them in the mailbox on my desk after class today, or tomorrow when we discuss this subject again. I hope today made you think about growing up. Next time we'll talk about all the things that will happen to your body during puberty. So be prepared.



Friend to the Modern Girl on-the-go

Developed by: Valerie Sabbag, Health Educator and curriculum developer.

This lesson was developed in consultation with Dr. Michelle Bourke.

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Toyna chin
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