

the puberty express

Puberty is a time when your body begins changing in the fast-track mode. If you think about it, you begin puberty in a child's body and you leave puberty in an adult body ... that's a lot of growing! The changes that happen to your body are completely normal and it doesn't matter if you are an early or late member of the puberty club—the changes will be the same.

All these body changes, both inside and out, are caused by hormones. Hormones are chemicals that travel through your bloodstream to different parts of your body, and tell them to grow and develop.

Your body isn't all that changes with the hormone surge. You also begin to experience new and strong feelings about how your body looks, feels and acts—and about growing up and sex. You may have more ups and downs in your feelings. You may have new and stronger sexual feelings and dreams.

You may want to learn some facts about bodies, about growing up and about sexual health. It's important because knowing these facts can help you stay healthy, take good care of yourself, and make good decisions about yourself and your health your whole life.

masturbation

During puberty, both boys and girls begin to experience sexual feelings. This is normal. These feelings happen in different ways for different people. Masturbation is one way of experiencing sexual feelings. Masturbation is touching or rubbing yourself sexually for pleasure. Guys rub their penis and girls usually rub their clitoris.

Both the penis and clitoris are sensitive to touch. While masturbating, you may have an intense sexual feeling called an orgasm. For guys, orgasm is at the moment of ejaculation. For girls, the sensations are concentrated in the area around her vulva or throughout her body.

Some people think masturbation is wrong and some people think it is harmful. Masturbation cannot hurt you. Some people do it and some people don't. Whether you do it or not is your choice.

In the know

Some of the words used in the following sections may be new to you. The pronunciation guide will help you to say the words correctly.

Areola — Ay-ree-OH-la

Circumcision — SUR-come-SI-zhun

Clitoris — CLIT-tor-iss

Ejaculate — ih-JACK-u-late

Erection — ih-REK-shun

Estrogen — ES-tro-jen

Fallopian tubes — fell-LOW-pee-yan
TOOBZ

Genitals — JEN-ih-tulls

Hormones — HOR-monz

Menstruation — men-stroo-AY-shun

Orgasm — ORE-gahz-um

Ovaries — OH-vuh-reez

Penis — PEE-niss

Progesterone — pro-JES-ter-ohne

Prostate — PROS-tayt

Puberty — PYOU-ber-tee

Semen — SEE-muhn

Sperm — SPURM

Testicles — TES-ti-kulz

Testosterone — Tes-TAH-stuh-rone

Uterus — YOU-ter-us

Vagina — vuh-JIE-nuh

Womb — WOOM

Masturbation myths

There are many myths surrounding masturbation. You may have heard that it leads to insanity, stunts your growth, stunts the size of a boy's penis (or makes it fall off), causes blindness, causes hair to grow on the palms of your hands or will make you a pervert. Don't believe these myths.