

# Puberty



# I ❤️ PUBERTY

BE WHO YOU ARE!  
AND say what you feel!  
because  
those who MIND don't matter  
& those who MATTER don't mind.  
-Dr. SEUSS

## Puberty!

Puberty is the biological transition from childhood to adulthood. Your body is changing to make it possible to have a baby in the future. Puberty affects your body, your thoughts and your feelings.

Puberty usually begins between the ages of 8 and 16 and lasts for 2 – 6 years. Sometimes girls begin puberty before boys. There is nothing you can do to speed it up or slow it down. Every person is unique and changes happen when your body is ready.

The many changes that take place in our bodies during puberty are caused by hormones. Puberty starts when your body releases hormones, which are chemical messages that travel through the bloodstream. Hormones are made in many places in our bodies including our pituitary gland, which is in our brain. When your body is ready it sends hormonal messages from your brain to your reproductive organs. In girls the reproductive organs are the ovaries, in males the reproductive organs are the testes.

When the ovaries receive the hormones from the brain they start making hormones called estrogen and progesterone. When the testicles receive hormones from the brain they start making a hormone called testosterone. Every person has hormones (testosterone, estrogen and progesterone) in their body, however, typically males have more testosterone and females have more estrogen and progesterone.

It is the hormones that the ovaries and testicles produce that allow all the other changes of puberty to happen. Changes can sometimes be surprising and uncomfortable, but they can also be exciting and enjoyable. Just think about all the things you can do when you grow up and become an adult!



## Questions???????

It is perfectly normal to have lots of questions when you are growing up and your body is changing. It is good to ask questions – that is how we learn.

### **Things you may have questions about:**

- What is puberty
- Menstruation, periods, cramps, bleeding
- Pads and tampons, swimming
- Vaginas, vulvas, penises, testicles
- Wet dreams, ejaculation, sperm, erections
- Circumcision, foreskin
- PMS, ovulation
- Discharge, the white stuff in your underwear
- Uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries
- Pubic hair, underarm hair, leg hair, arm hair, facial hair, chest hair
- Shaving, waxing, removing body hair
- Stretch marks, cellulite
- Feelings, emotions, mood swings, hormones
- Crushes, I think I like someone
- Relationships, friendships
- Breasts, boobs, nipples, bras, underwear
- Sex, reproduction, how babies are made
- Pregnancy
- Growing taller and wider
- Gaining weight, muscles
- Body changes
- Growing feet, stinky feet
- Body odour (B.O.), stinky armpits, deodorant, sweating
- Acne, zits, pimples, black heads, skin changes, skin care
- Bullying, standing up for yourself and your friends
- Make up, hair
- Clothes, shoes
- Health, eating, exercising
- Am I normal?

## Changes for Everyone during Puberty

All these changes do not take place at once. Most happen slowly, over a few years.

- Getting taller, growth spurt
- Arms and legs grow longer
- Hands and feet grow larger
- Gaining weight
- Changing shape
- Muscles develop
- Bones in the face grow, and the face looks less childlike
- Developing a lower voice : the voice of both males and females deepens, however, male voices often deepen more
- Growing hair under the arms
- Growing hair on the genitals
- The hair on the arms and legs getting thicker and darker
- Growing facial hair
- Body odour (B.O.)
- Sweating more
- Getting pimples, black heads and skin changes due to an increase in oil that the skin will produce – pimples may appear on the face, neck, back or shoulders
- Genitals will grow and develop
- Have feelings of attraction towards others
- May develop crushes
- Emotional changes, mood swings: you may be happy one minute and sad the next or have many different feelings all at once



## Changes to Male Bodies

- Testicles grow larger and fuller – often one of the first signs of puberty
- Penis grows longer and wider
- Body gains weight and grows taller, shoulders and chest grow broader
- Some boys experience breast tissue development – if this happens it will go away in a year to two years
- Soft, darkish hair grows around the base of the penis and later becomes curly, thick and coarse
- Scrotum becomes a darker colour and grows pubic hair
- Hair grows on the face, starting with the moustache
- Hair may grow on the chest and/or back
- The larynx (vocal cords) grow bigger
- The voice becomes deeper – often cracking and squeaking
- The Adam's Apple may begin to show
- Sperm begin to be produced in the testicles
- Ejaculation, including wet dreams, may begin to occur
- Erections happen more often, sometimes when you least expect it
- Feelings and moods may change and go up and down

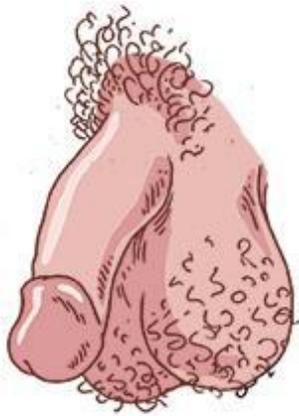
## Changes to Female Bodies

- Breast buds appear (a small bump under the nipples) – often one of the first signs of puberty
- Often one breast develops before the other
- Ovaries grow larger
- Uterus grows larger
- Vagina and labia grow larger
- Hips become wider and more curvy
- Soft, darkish hair grows around the vulva and later becomes curly, thick and coarse
- White, sticky fluid may come out of the vagina – this is called discharge
- Breasts and nipples gradually grow larger and fuller
- Nipples may become a darker colour
- Ovulation begins (the release of an egg into the fallopian tube)
- Menstruation (your period) begins
- You may have a heavy or a light period
- You may have cramps or back pain
- You may feel bloated
- Emotional changes, mood swings– you may notice changes in your mood that change with your menstrual cycle

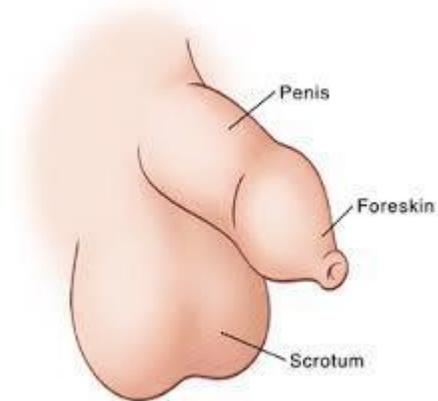
# The Penis and Scrotum



**UNCIRCUMCISED PENIS**



**CIRCUMCISED PENIS**



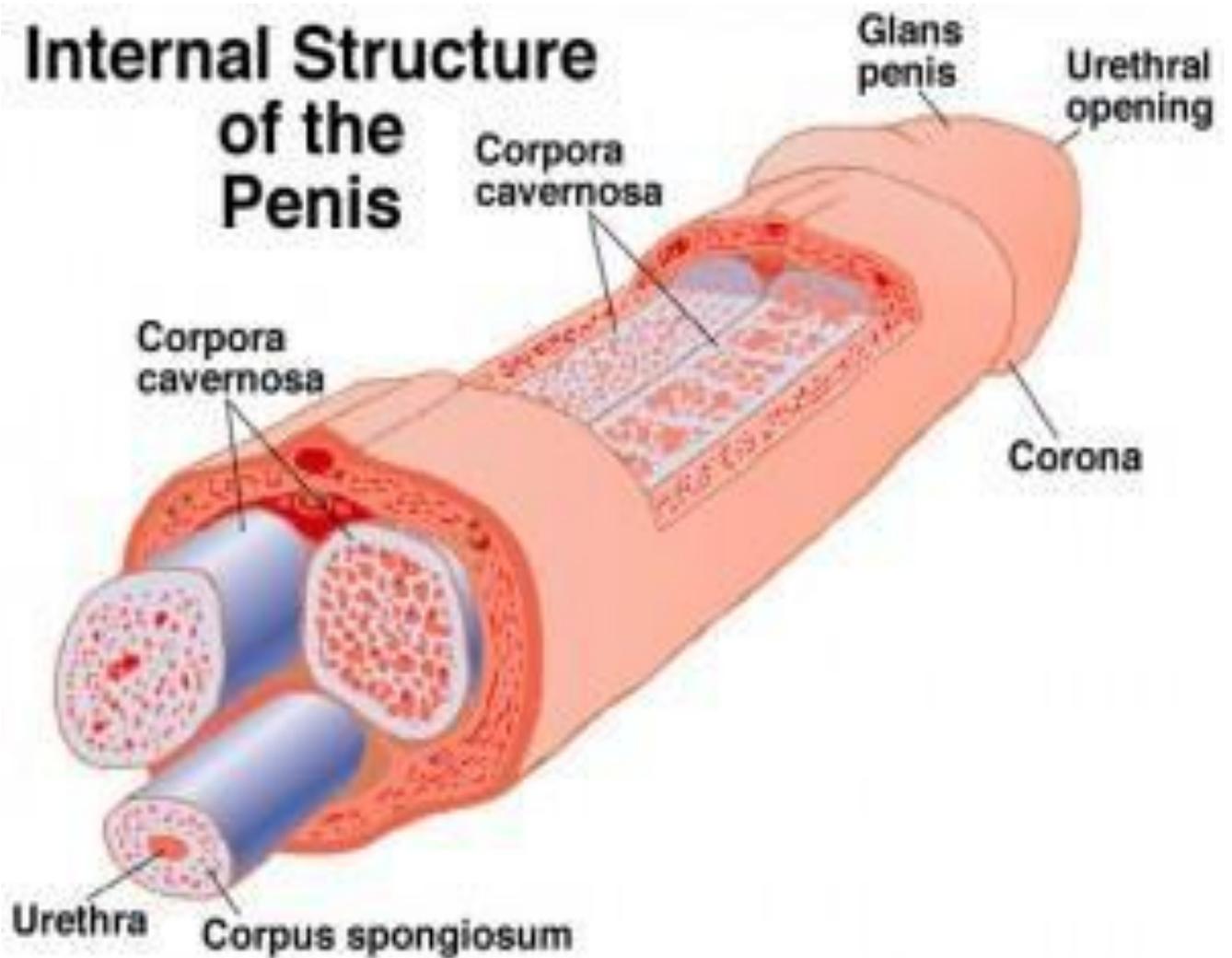
**Uncircumcised Penis**



**Circumcised Penis**

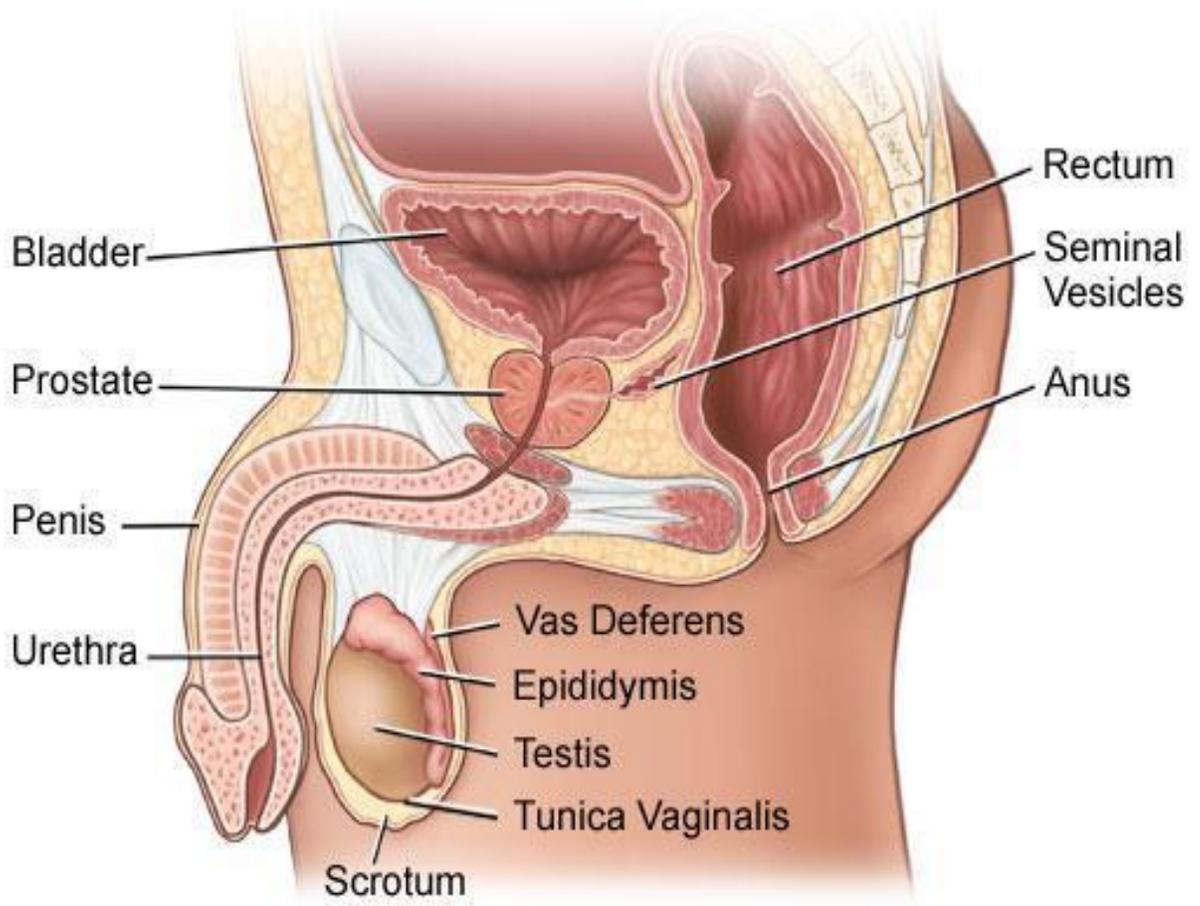
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## The Inside of the Penis

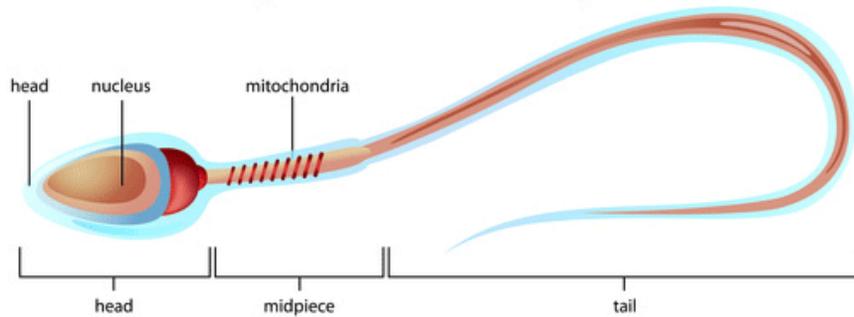


# Internal Male Anatomy

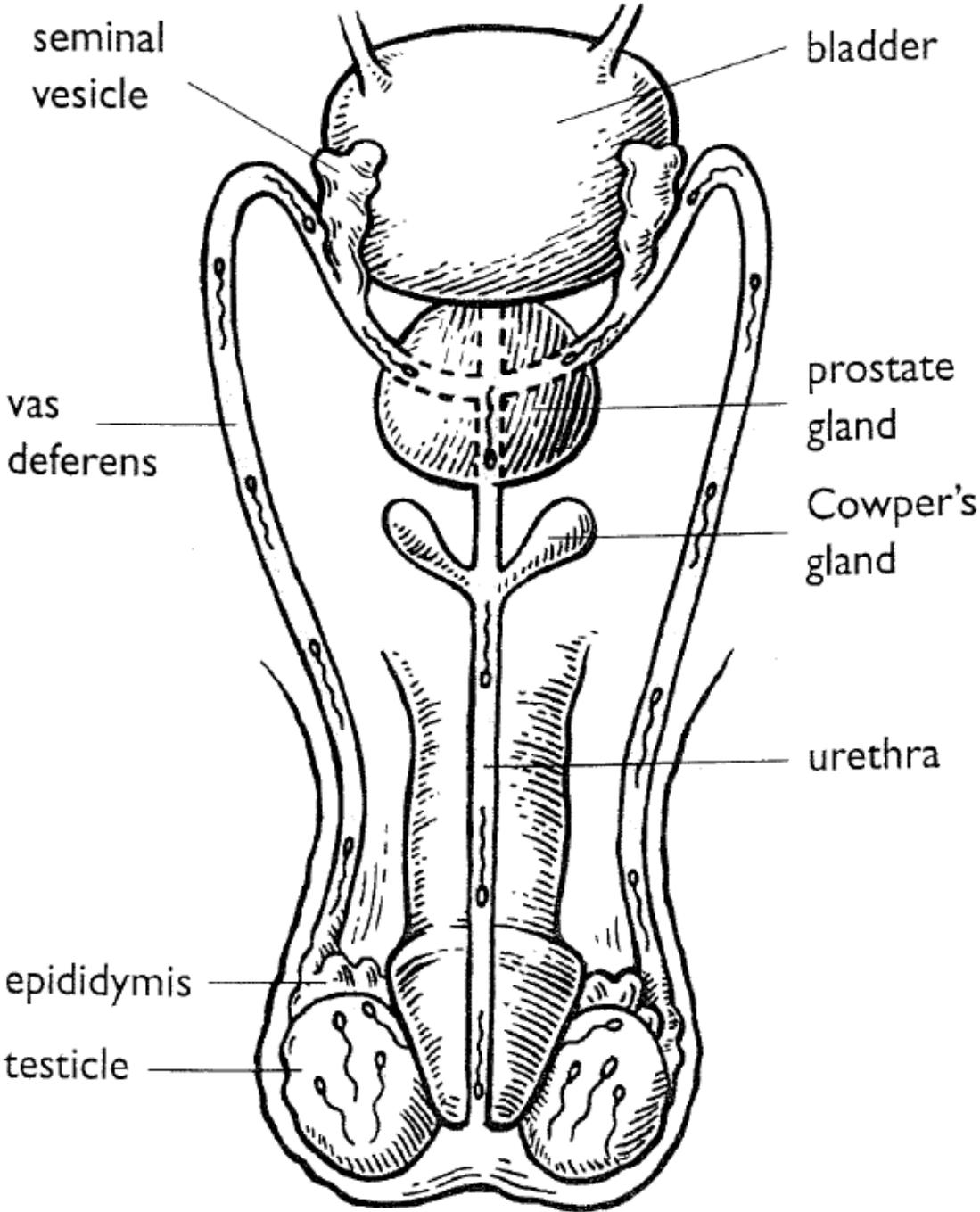
## Male Reproductive Tract



## Sperm Cell Anatomy



# Path of the Sperm



## Penis: An Owner's Manual

Chances are that either you or someone you know has a penis. Having a penis can be fun: it's hanging out, not hidden inside the body. It's easy to play with, and even lets you pee standing up. But sometimes having a penis can be worrisome. Let's take a look at some of the big issues concerning young men and their penises.

### Size

One of the biggest concerns for many people is the size of their penis. Many people, even adults, want to know, "Do I have a small penis?" Sometime during puberty, the penis starts to get bigger. Just like all other aspects of puberty, there isn't a set age at which this happens, but rest assured it happens to everyone.

There isn't a normal size for any particular age. However, 90 percent of all adult erect (hard), penises are between five and seven inches long. Also, the size of a penis when it's flaccid (soft) doesn't have anything to do with what it will be like when it's erect (hard). Some people are "Growers, not showers." This means if their penis is small when it is soft, it will grow a lot to become hard. If your penis is large when it is soft, it will not grow much to become hard.

### Erections

When someone gets aroused sexually, blood flows into the penis at a faster rate than it flows out. This is called vasocongestion. This causes the penis to get larger and harder, which is called getting an erection. Sometimes though, erections can happen at the weirdest times. For example, you're sitting in math class taking a test, and all of a sudden you've got an erection! What you have is a spontaneous erection.

Spontaneous erections are erections that you get when you're not sexually aroused. Spontaneous erections seem to just pop up for no reason at all. And that can feel pretty embarrassing. They go away fairly quickly if you ignore them. You can sing a song in your head, or try to say the alphabet backward to get your mind off it. This can happen a lot to a young people because your hormones are all over the place. Don't worry; spontaneous erections happen less and less frequently as you get older.

## **Circumcision**

Are you circumcised? Does it matter? Circumcision (or removal of the foreskin) is generally done shortly after birth, however, in some cultures it is done when puberty begins. Whether or not you are circumcised, your penis works the same way; they just look a little different. But people who have uncircumcised penises need to pull the foreskin back when they urinate and wash – whether uncircumcised or circumcised, proper cleaning of the penis is important.

## **Wet Dreams**

Ever wake up in the morning to find something white and sticky in your underwear or pajamas? This is called a wet dream and it's completely normal. Sometimes while you are sleeping, your penis gets hard and you ejaculate. Most guys have wet dreams occasionally. As you get older and your hormones level off, you'll get them less and less.

## **Testicles**

Once you hit puberty your brain tells your testicles to start making testosterone, and the testosterone tells the testicles to start making sperm. The testicles make a phenomenal amount of sperm, about 1000 sperm every second! The sperm are stored in the epididymis where they continue to grow and mature. The reason so many sperm are produced is that each ejaculation contains approximately 200 million sperm.

The scrotum protects the testicles and the sperm by keeping them at the proper temperature, a few degrees below body temperature. If the testicles are cold the scrotum pulls them up closer to the body to keep them warm. If they are too hot the scrotum hangs down loosely to keep cool. Often one testicle hangs lower than the other and one can be larger than the other.

You only have one body and it is yours to take care of, so eat healthy, exercise, sleep lots, talk to others and be proud of who you are!

Adapted from Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Greg Dervin.

# Vulva: An Owner's Manual

## **Vulvas**

What is a vulva? A vulva is the entire external female genitalia – inner and outer labia, clitoris, clitoral hood, mons and urethral and vagina openings. This part of the anatomy gets called lots of funny names (I am sure that you have heard them) and often it gets confused with the vagina – the stretchable canal that leads to the cervix and uterus and is involved in menstruation, pregnancy and birth.

## **Labia**

The word labia means lips in Latin. The outer labia are two folds of skin and fatty tissue that are covered in pubic hair after puberty and sometimes cover the rest of the vulva. They can be large or small, short or long or two different sizes.

The inner labia are the folds of skin that go from the clitoral hood to below the vaginal opening. They can vary in colour from pink to purple to brown depending on the colour of your skin. Like nipples, inner labia can change colour as girls mature. Both nipples and inner labia also often change colour during pregnancy. Sometimes the inner labia emerge from the outer labia and sometimes they are tucked up inside. Just like the outer labia they can be large or small, short or long or different sizes.

## **Discharge**

Have you ever wondered what that white sticky stuff is in your underwear? During puberty the vagina starts to produce a discharge that can be white or clear. This is the self-cleaning aspect of vaginas - aren't they wonderful! Discharge carries germs and other unwanted stuff out of the body. Some girls and women have lots of discharge and some have very little. The amount and texture of discharge will change throughout the menstrual cycle.

## **Vaginas**

Because the vagina is self-cleaning there is no need to clean it or douche. Simply wash the vulva with warm water and a wash cloth. Washing inside the vagina can actually cause infections, irritation and inflammation because the natural pH balance inside the vagina will be disturbed. It is also a good idea to wear cotton underwear to allow the vagina to breathe and go commando at night if possible.

## **Periods.**

Girls usually have their first period between the ages of 8 and 16. The average age that girls get their period is 12. Usually breasts and pubic hair begin to grow before the first period. Periods are simply the lining of the uterus shedding. Each month the lining of the uterus grows in case of a pregnancy. The lining is there to nourish and protect the growing fetus. But if you are not pregnant you do not need this lining, so it sheds. Periods (or menstruation) can be red, pink, rust or brown in colour. They are sometimes heavy and sometimes light and sometimes in between. Each period generally lasts 3-7 days. Most people who get their period, get it approximately once every month, but every person is different. When you first start getting your period you may not get it every month as your body is still practicing.

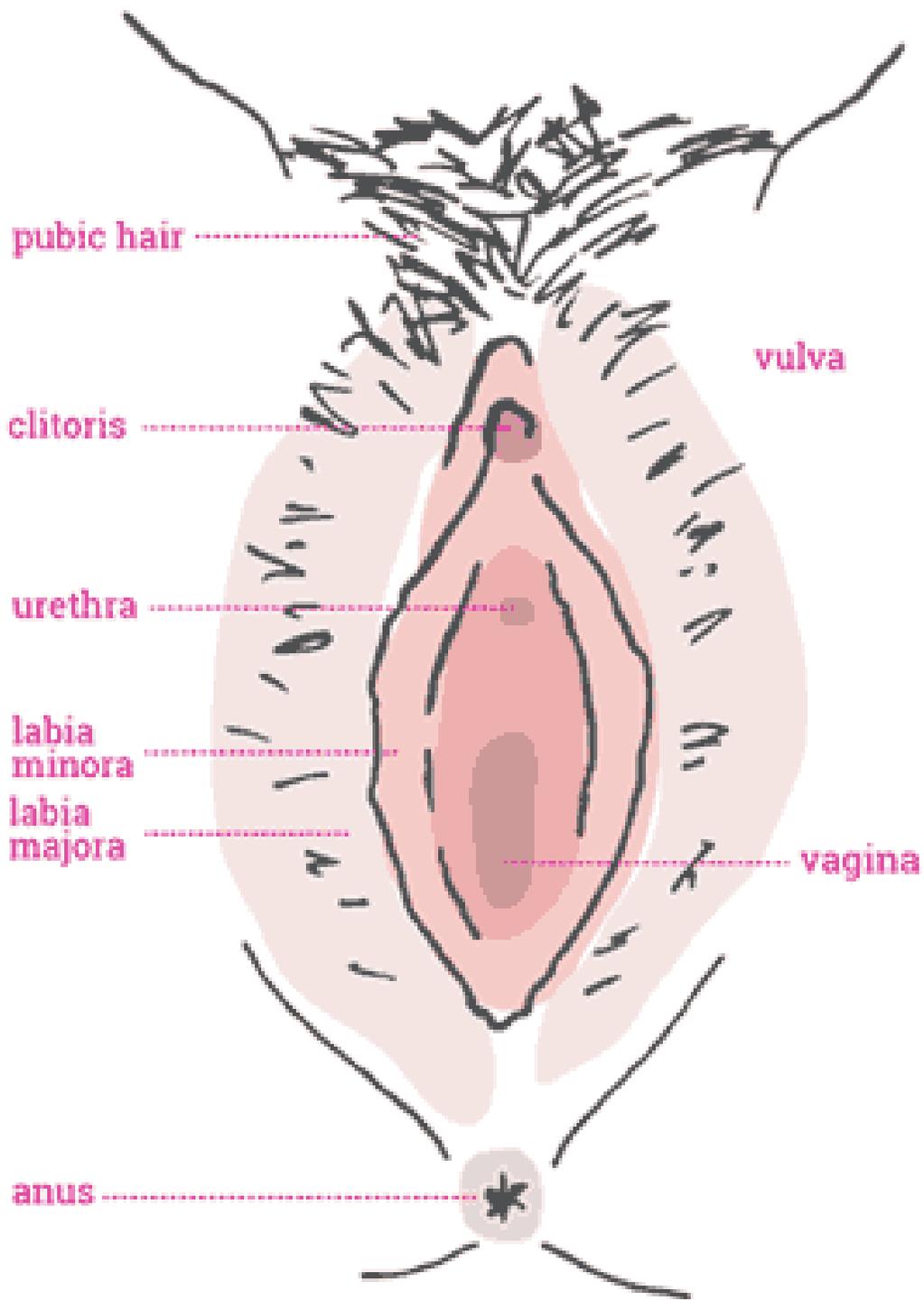
When you have your period you can wear pads, panty-liners, tampons or menstrual cups. It is up to you. Most people start out with pads and panty-liners. It is a good idea to check out all your options at a drug or grocery store and read the packages. They often have instructions and diagrams that can be helpful. It can be overwhelming at first but just try things and you will find what works best for you. It is also a good idea to talk to other people who get their period about what works for them.

Some people get cramps before or during their period. They can last days, hours or a few minutes. Exercise is actually good for eliminating cramps. A hot water bottle or a hot bath can feel good as well. Some people also get tender breasts before or during their period. Every person is unique and so is their period. It can be helpful to talk to other people in your family who get their period if you are comfortable doing so. They may have had similar experiences as you and could have some great advice. There is also a list of books at the end of this booklet. Sometimes it is more comfortable to read about our bodies in private.

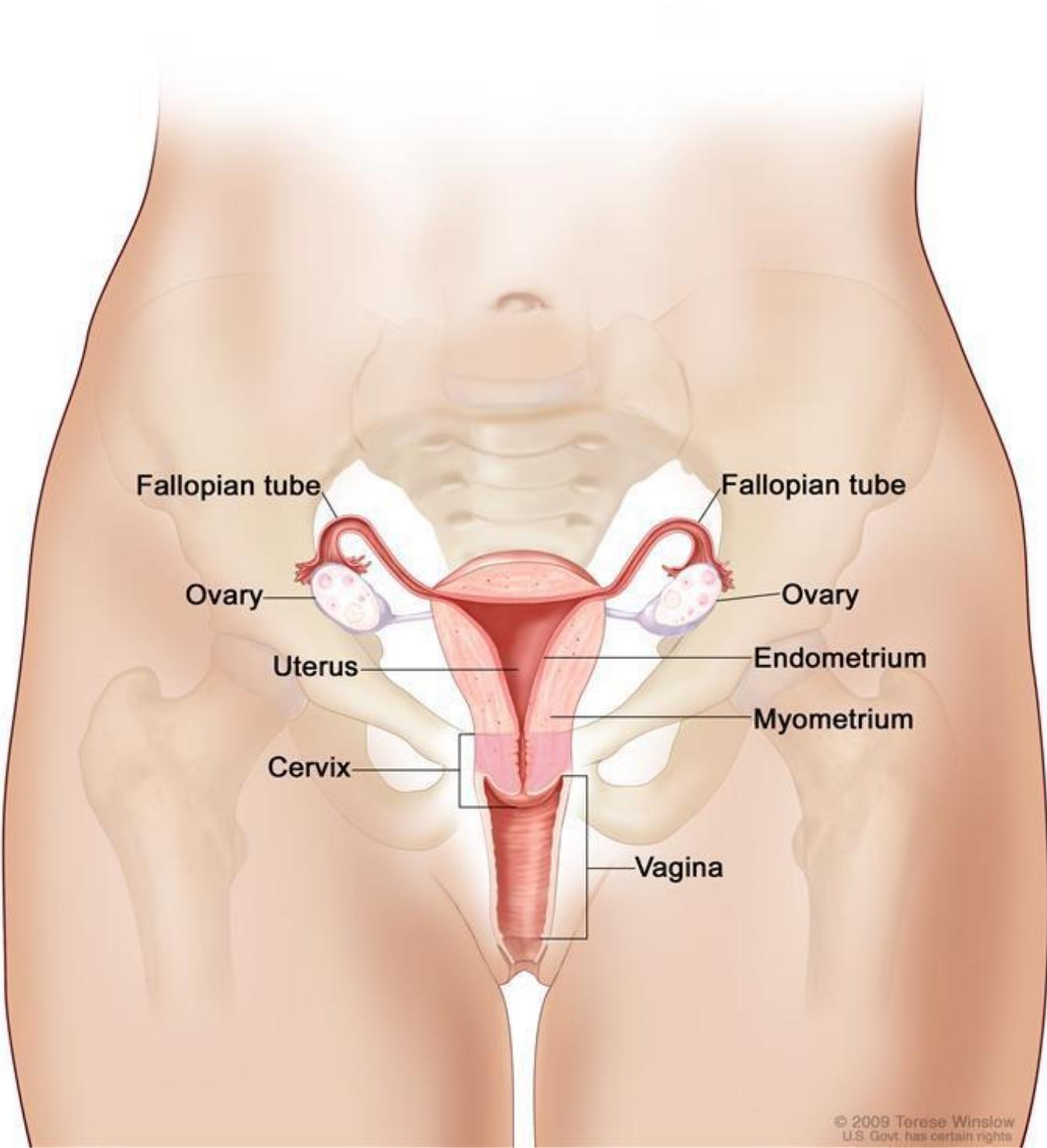
You only have one body and it is yours to take care of, so eat healthy, exercise, sleep lots, talk to others and be proud of who you are!

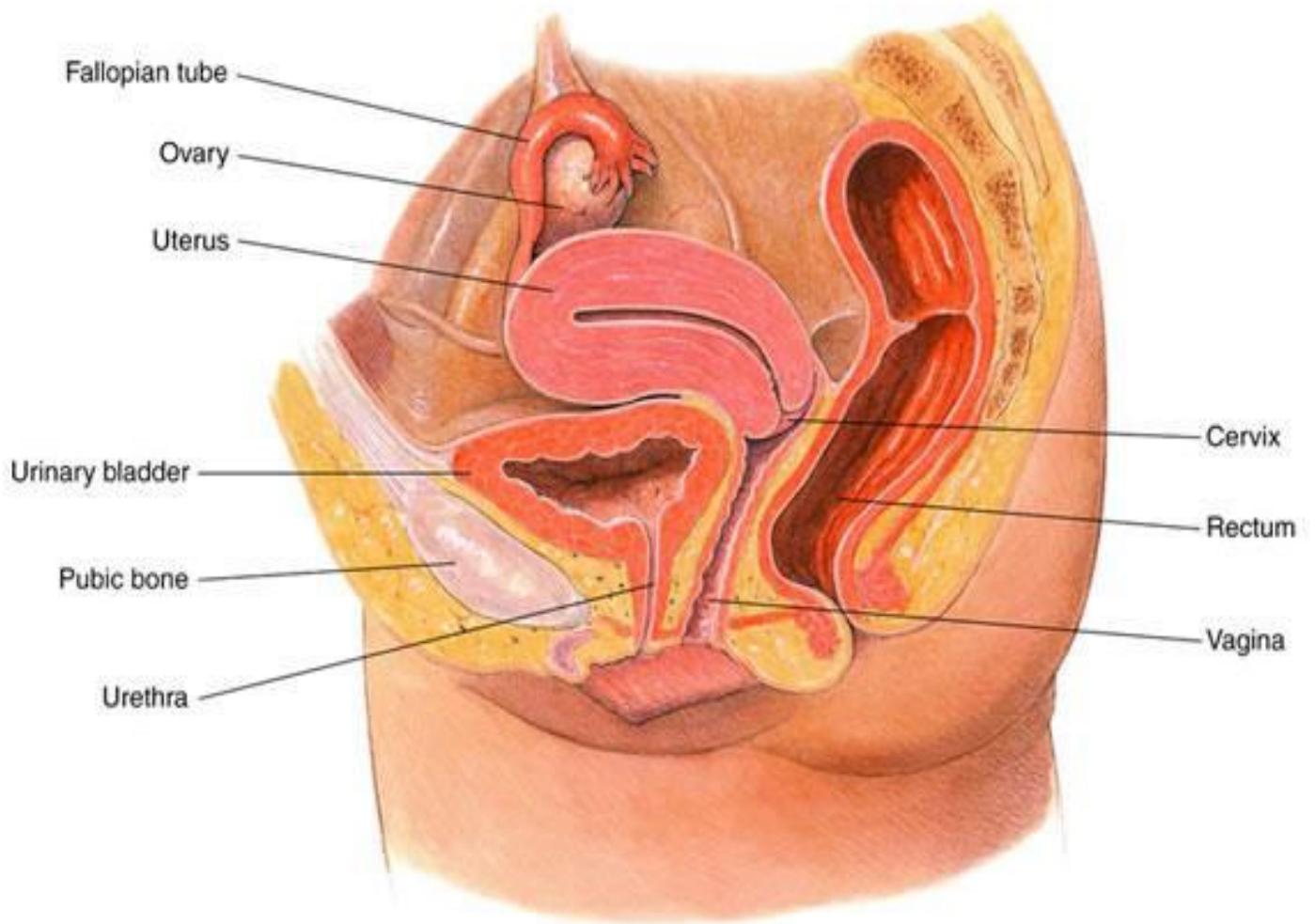
Adapted from Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

# The Vulva



# Internal Female Anatomy





Lining of the uterus is shed during menstruation



Lining of the uterus becomes thicker to prepare for possible implantation of an embryo

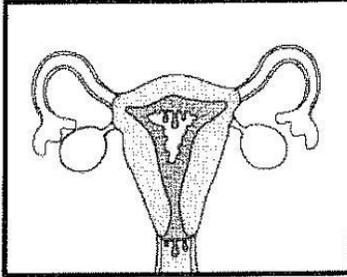
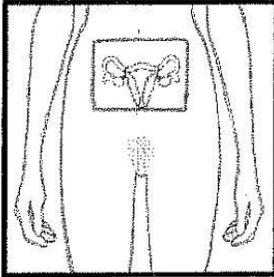


Lining of the uterus is thick just prior to menstruation

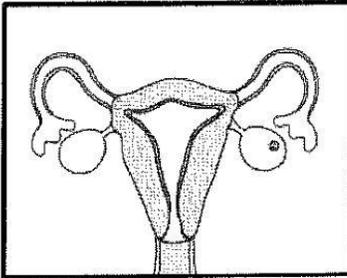


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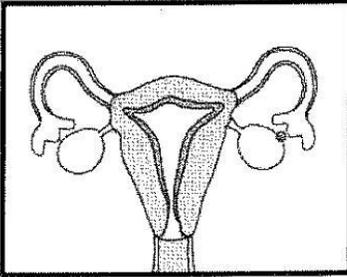
# The Menstrual Cycle



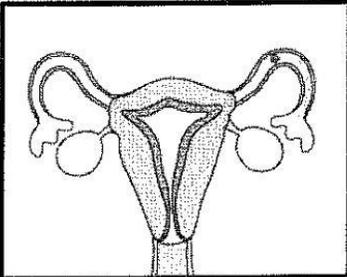
Beginning of cycle (menstruation)



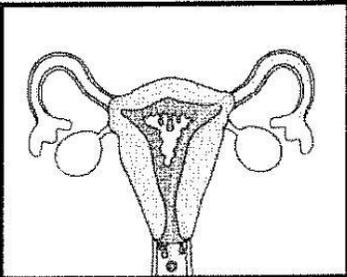
Ovum starts to mature  
(lining begins to thicken to  
prepare for possible pregnancy)



Release of mature ovum  
(ovulation)



Ovum travels to uterus



Beginning of next cycle  
(menstruation)

## How to Keep your **Penis** and **Testicles** Healthy & Happy

Having a penis can be fun: it's hanging out for you to see and it allows you to pee standing up! But you have to take care of your penis and clean it properly whether you are circumcised or not circumcised.

<b>Do</b>	<b>Do Not</b>
<b>Clean your penis &amp; testicles regularly with soap and water – wash under the foreskin if you are not circumcised.</b>	<b>Do not wear tight pants or underwear– they prevent good air circulation to the penis and testicles and cut off blood circulation.</b>
<b>Wear athletic supports (jock straps and cups) when playing active sports.</b>	<b>Do not be embarrassed about spontaneous erections – they are natural and normal.</b>
<b>Wear clean underwear every day and wash your pants regularly.</b>	<b>Do not kick or hit any other person in the penis or testicles.</b>
<b>Wash your hands BEFORE and AFTER going to the washroom.</b>	<b>NO Wedgies – they can cause permanent damage!</b>
<b>Examine your testicles during or after a warm bath or shower to look for lumps &amp; bumps.</b>	<b>Do not hold your pee – pee if you have to pee (and pull back your foreskin if you have one).</b>
<b>Be careful when doing up the zipper on your pants – you don't want anything to get caught.</b>	<b>Do not share unwashed towels, washcloths, underwear or bathing suits.</b>
<b>Have regular checkups with a health care provider.</b>	<b>Do not spray colognes or perfumes on your penis or testicles – if they smell, wash them.</b>
<b>You only have one body – treat it nicely &amp; with respect.</b>	<b>Don't be afraid to ask questions about your body – it's how we learn.</b>

## How to keep your **Vulva & Vagina** Healthy & Happy

The Vagina naturally keeps itself healthy & clean. That is what discharge is (the white stuff sometimes in your underwear). Therefore the inside of the vagina does not need to be cleaned with soap – soap can actually hurt your vagina. Only use soap on the outside.

<b>Do</b>	<b>Do Not</b>
<p><b>Wash your hands BEFORE &amp; AFTER going to the washroom as you may be touching menstrual products or your vulva.</b></p>	<p><b>Do not be embarrassed if your period stains your underwear or pants – it has happened to most people who get their period.</b></p>
<p><b>Wipe your vulva from front to back when going to the washroom or washing yourself.</b></p>	<p><b>Do not share unwashed towels, washcloths, underwear or bathing suits.</b></p>
<p><b>Change tampons, pads and panty liners regularly when you have your period to avoid odour and Toxic Shock Syndrome.</b></p>	<p><b>Do not use scented soaps or products on your vulva or vagina – they are sensitive to chemicals such as perfumes and fabric softener.</b></p>
<p><b>Pee when you have to pee – don't hold it!</b></p>	<p><b>Do not wear tight or restrictive pants for long periods of time.</b></p>
<p><b>Wash your vulva with a wash cloth and warm water – no soap necessary inside.</b></p>	<p><b>Do not wear underwear to bed (unless you have your period) – your vulva and vagina need to breathe.</b></p>
<p><b>Wear cotton underwear so your vulva and vagina can breathe.</b></p>	<p><b>Do not sit around in damp or wet clothing.</b></p>
<p><b>Your body is beautiful &amp; unique; treat it nicely &amp; with respect.</b></p>	<p><b>Don't be afraid to ask questions about your body – it's how we learn.</b></p>

# Healthy Relationships & Friendships

## Qualities to look for

### Someone who...

- Is respectful and kind
- Is comfortable with themselves
- Listens to what you have to say
- Doesn't twist your words
- Takes responsibility for their own behaviour and feelings
- Shares common interests with you
- Has a sense of humour
- Enjoys other friends and interests
- Enjoys the fact that you have other friends and interests
- Respects your values
- Is genuine and honest
- Supports your goals and activities
- Encourages independence
- Enjoys their personal time and space
- Is not afraid to have fun in life
- Appreciates you just the way you are

## Qualities to watch out for

### Someone who...

- Is violent, mean or hurtful
- Thinks that they are too good for you
- Always wants to do things their way
- Doesn't want to talk about what is bugging you
- Does not compromise
- Does not like your friends
- Tells you what to do, say, eat etc.
- Wants to know where you are and who you are with at all times
- Puts you down, even when you are feeling good
- Constantly blames other people and does not take any responsibility
- Uses silence as a punishment
- Is jealous
- Is not comfortable with themselves
- Makes you do things you do not want to do
- Lies or twists the truth
- Has ever threatened to hit you or hurt you
- Does not listen to you, talks over you, pretends not to hear you

## Resources

Criswell, Patti; illustrated by Michelle Watkins (2006). **Friends: Making Them and Keeping Them.**

Gravelle, Karen & Gravelle, Jennifer (2006). **The Period Book: Everything you don't want to ask but need to know.**

Gravelle, Karen (1998). **What's Going on Down There: Answers to Questions Boys find Hard to Ask.**

Harris, Robie H.; illustrated by Michael Emberley (2004). **It's Perfectly Normal: Changing bodies, growing up, sex and sexual health.**

Kauder Nalebuff, Rachel (2009). **My Little Red Book.**

*\*\*Short stories about first periods*

Lavender, Missy & Donatelli Ihm, Jeni; illustrated by Jan Dolby (2015). **Below Your Belt, How to be Queen of your Pelvic Region: A Pelvic Health Handbook for Girls.**

Women's Health Foundation.

Madison, Lynda (2013). **The Feelings Book: The Care and Keeping of your Emotions.**

Metzger, Julie & Lehman, Robert (2012). **Will Puberty Last my Whole Life: Real answers to real questions from preteens about body changes, sex, and other growing up stuff.**

Saltz, Dr. Gail. (2007). **Changing You! A Guide to Body Changes and Sexuality.**

Silverberg, Cory, illustrated by Fiona Smyth (2015). **Sex is a Funny Word: A book about bodies, feelings, and YOU.**

Weiss, Marisa & Friedman, Isabel (2008). **Taking Care of Your "Girls": A breast health guide for girls, teens and in-betweens.**

Weschler, Toni (2006). **Cycle Savvy: The Smart Teens Guide to the Mysteries of her Body.**

KEEP  
GROWING



For more information contact:

Stacey Jacobs, MSc  
Community Sexual Health Educator

# SHORE Centre

Sexual Health Options, Resources & Education

235 King Street East, Suite 130  
Kitchener, ON N2G 4N5

Email: [education@shorecentre.ca](mailto:education@shorecentre.ca)

Website: [shorecentre.ca](http://shorecentre.ca)

Phone: 519 743 9360



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