

**Puberty as Adolescent- neither a child nor an adult.**

Key messages	1)What is puberty? 2)How does puberty develop? 3)Physical aspects. 4)Hygiene during puberty.
Time	30 mins.



*Today, every fifth person (10-19 years)and every third young person (10-24 years), in India is an adolescent.*

*Almost 100% girls undergo puberty, but only 1% girls have adequate knowledge about the pubertal changes.*

☞ **Dear Facilitator, read out the following story to introduce participants to the concept of Puberty.**

My name is Hitesh and I am 16 years old. Since the last few weeks I am facing problems regarding my body as in, my moods, my physique and my health. There is always a tension lingering and I am restless most of the times. There are mood swings and I am developing rebellious attitude towards everything.

**Questions:**

- Are these normal?
- What should I do about it?
- When will it go away?

**What is Puberty?**

Puberty is the stage of physical maturation in which an individual becomes physiologically capable of sexual reproduction.

*Pubertal phase requires a lot of communication because several changes happening together may confuse the adolescents.*

☞ **Dear facilitator, you will now discuss the various changes during Puberty**

Several changes happen as a part of puberty!

☺ **Physical:**

Secondary sexual characteristics like pubic hair growth,changes in private parts of the body.

**Physical changes**

*In girls, puberty usually starts around 10-11 years of age. In boys, puberty begins around 12 years as age, Puberty is a process that goes on for several years. Most girls are physically mature by about 14-15 years of age. Boys mature at about 15 or 16years.*

☺ **Mental:**

The children are tempted to think like adults wish to shoulder responsibilities like adults. They indulge in activities which will make them feel like adults.

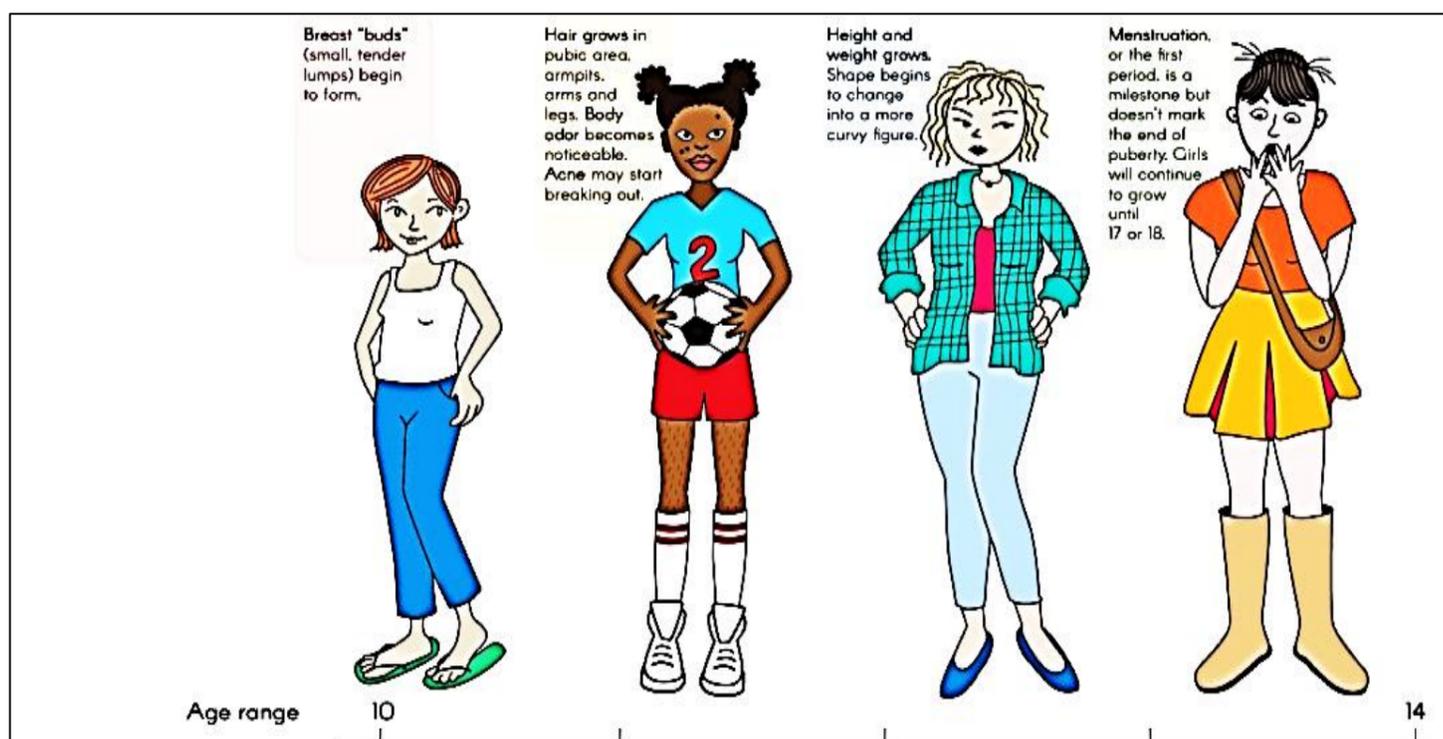
☺ **Psychological:**

Most of them witness mood swings because of the pent-up emotions and hormonal changes.

☺ **Social:**

Confusion stemming out from the society's perspective towards them which is inconsistent, sometimes they are treated like children and sometimes they are treated like adults.

Several secondary sexual characteristics develop as a part of pubertal changes, an important milestone is attainment of menarche (the first occurrence of menstruation) by girls and sperm Arche (the beginning of development of sperm in boy's testicles) at puberty by boys.



**Am I normal?**

Puberty changes can be quite challenging, but what is happening to you is completely normal. The pituitary gland at the base of your brain is responsible for what you see taking place.

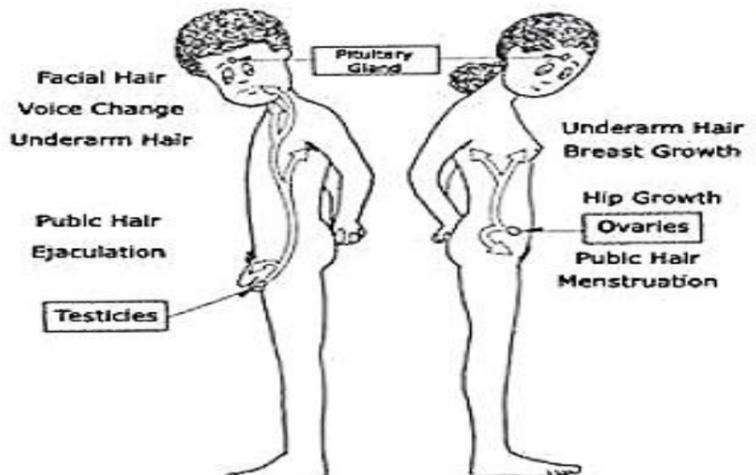
It triggers the release of sex hormones like testosterone, which stimulate the physical changes you are experiencing. Some changes may be more challenging than others, but there is help at hand.

### SEX HORMONES:

- **Testosterone** – male (testes)
- **Estrogen** – female (ovaries)
- stimulate the many physical changes that adolescents go through during puberty.

**Secondary sex characteristics:**

- \* development of the breast.
- \* appearance of maxillary and pubic hair, and others.
- \* Boys' testes also begin to produce sperm cells.
- \* Girls' ovaries begin to develop egg cells



- Dear facilitator, show the chart as below as an audio-visual or as a printed chart.

**MALE**



**FEMALE**



There is development of secondary sexual characters because of Pubertal changes. It is mainly: **Hygiene in pubertal age.**

### Activity

- Dear facilitator, you will now discuss hygiene during pubertal hygiene. You can make notes about what changes participants are able to identify, where do they see the need to maintain hygiene by themselves and its importance in their perspective. The facilitator may also want to check if there is any awareness present in the participants as to what happens if they fail to maintain hygiene.

As puberty starts the body undergoes many changes in its structure both internally and externally which is why our body producing more oil, more sweat and even growing hairs in different parts of the body (arm pit, private parts most commonly), weight gain, which slowly adjusts as you grow up. To avoid germs and infections from settling in these areas it is very important to keep these areas clean and dry. Also, it is important that all your clothes especially the inner wears are dried in the sun because sun-light is a powerful disinfectant.

During puberty, adolescents may undergo a slight increase in body weight as a process of change. Adolescents should not obsess over it. Healthy and regular eating, regular exercises or yoga,

## Puberty

drinking enough water, good amount of sleep can help one maintain a good physique during this period.

### **Certain activities can be done to maintain personal hygiene and avoid body odor like:**

- ☺ *Taking bath daily with adequate amount of soap and water with extra attention to armpits and groin, which has many sweats producing glands and where bacteria can grow quickly.*
- ☺ *Wearing clean clothes every day – especially socks, inner wears, etc. and anything which is body hugging.*
- ☺ *Try wearing seasonal clothes prefer silky clothes in rainy, cottons in summer and woolens or thick clothes in winters.*
- ☺ *Smelly socks can be a concerned issue, as the glands produce secretions causing sweat inside the socks. Take off socks frequently or add powder to avoid.*

### **Problem skin:**

Blocked pores, pimples and acne are major road-blocks to good looks at this age. Therefore, it is necessary to keep your skin clean and healthy by washing gently twice a day.

- ☺ Make sure towels and hand kerchiefs are washed daily so they do not become a source of bacteria and cause skin infections.

Inability to communicate this to the adolescents can lead to the formation of stigma and taboo related to sexual and reproductive health, creating further road-blocks in the healthy development of their sexual and reproductive health.

- ☺ These road-blocks can be physical, psychological or social.

For example:

1. Physical discomfort during the menstrual cycle may not be expressed because of shyness and stigma “What will people think about me if I speak about it openly?”

### **Professionals who can help you better understand puberty and hormonal changes:**

- **Gynecologist:** *A medical practitioner who has specialized in diagnosing and treating disorders related to female reproductive health.*
- **Endocrinologist:** *A medical practitioner who has specialized in diagnosing and treating disorders caused by the functioning of endocrine glands.*
- **Psychiatrist:** *A medical practitioner who has specialized in diagnosing and treating disorders related to the psychological health of an individual.*
- **Counselling Psychologist:** *A mental health practitioner who has specialized in the field of treating the psychological illness through counselling and psychotherapy.*

**Nutrition during adolescence**

Adolescence is a vital period of growth and development. Therefore, good nutrition becomes a prior necessity for a healthy body. Nutrition and physical growth are co-related; optimal nutrition is essential for achieving full growth potential. During adolescence, the need for most nutrients including energy, protein, vitamins and minerals increases, and there is immense wear-tear of issues happening and bones are getting stronger to create a strong adult physique. Food choices are to be made very carefully as appetite also increases. Youngsters generally binge on junk food which may be very filling but not so nutritive and healthy. Therefore, cautious choices are needed to be made to which would include healthy food.

## Pubertal Behaviors

Key messages	1)What is puberty? 2)How does puberty develop? 3)Physical aspects Hygiene during puberty.
Time	45 mins.



- Dear facilitator, discuss about the pubertal behavior's.

### What is Masturbation:

*Masturbation is a very common activity in human beings, it involves self-stimulation of the genitals to achieve sexual arousal and pleasure, usually to the point of orgasm (sexual climax). In boys, this could result in spilling over of the semen from the penis and is very common during adolescence. There is nothing to be ashamed about masturbation as long it is done in the privacy of one's room, without disturbing or harming oneself or others and not as result of psychological dependence.*

There is no fixed number of how many times masturbation can be done; however, one must remember that it is only a pleasure giving activity which should not be allowed to hijack one's daily activities. Also, it is not compulsory to watch porn to masturbate.

### What is Nightfall:

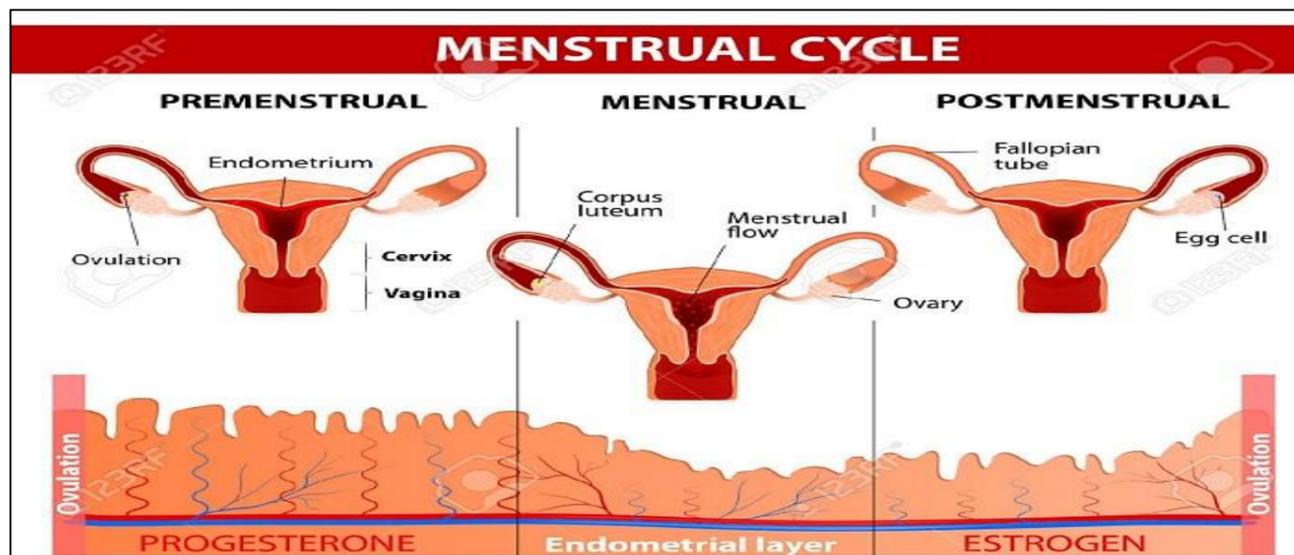
Night fall or wet dreams is another very common occurrence among men, especially among adolescents and young adults. This is nothing but natural masturbation when the body releases pent- up energy stored inside through involuntary ejaculation during sleep in the night or in the early hours of the morning. In fact, it is very important for the care-givers to convey that nightfall is a very healthy sign of growing up and certainly doesn't mean that the body needs sex. This will help the young boys feel less frustrated or anxious about it and they won't have to search for guidance from people with half-knowledge who can misguide them.

**Important note:** However, one must remember to keep the genital area clean both after the nightfall and after masturbation and wear clean and dry under-garments. Please refer the picture below for various sexual infections which can happen to the various parts of genitals.

☞ Dear facilitator, you will now discuss Menstruation.

### Menstruation:

Menstruation is periodic passage of blood from vagina every month. It is also called Menses or periods or Chums in common parlance. Menstruation is the process by which a female's body prepares itself for bearing a child. As a part of this reproductive system growth process, the ovaries in the females start functioning and produce an egg (Ovum). This egg first matures in the ovary and on reaching a size, it comes out of ovary and enters the fallopian tube. When egg is maturing in the ovary, the hormones released causes the lining of the uterus to increase in anticipation of a pregnancy. Bleeding can longer initially but then it takes time to regulate over a period.



If the adolescent girl engages in unprotected sex, then, the sperms of the male passed through the semen during sex enters the vagina, passes to the uterus and finally go into the fallopian tube. If the ovum is present in the fallopian tube and the sperms meet with it, then pregnancy can occur.

However, the egg production is NOT very regular in adolescence.

As we see, menstruation is a natural process which has been created to facilitate reproduction of human species, therefore onset of menstruation and menstrual cycle should be regarded as a welcoming sign of starting on to fertility and not as an illness or impurity as considered in many cultures. In fact, they should be encouraged to seek a medical opinion if the periods continue to be irregular. However, even today girls face many restrictions during the process of menstruation.

- Dear facilitator, This is an open question and answer activity where participants will be asked to raise hands if the answer is yes.

- Were you told how menstruation happens before it happened?
- Do you know that the cloth used as a pad during periods must be cleaned before reuse?
- Did you used old cloth as menstrual absorbent?
- How did you feel when you got your first period?
- Did you miss school because of menstruation?
- Were there any restrictions imposed on you because of menstruation?
- Did wash the cloth before using the first time?
- Were you aware about sanitary napkins before you got period?



**Then what should I do?? How should I follow proper hygiene during menstruation??**

- Choose the method of sanitation that suits you the best. If you are more comfortable with sanitary napkins than cloth, feel free to use sanitary napkins. But cloth sanitary napkins are also good to use if you want to use them.
- Please change your sanitary napkin/cloth every 6 hours.
- Keep yourself clean: Always use only warm water to clean vagina or vulva, and soap only to wash externally. Soap should never be used to clean the vagina from inside.
- Keep hair around your private parts trimmed or shaved.

## Puberty

- It is important to understand that the used napkins can spread infections, therefore they must be wrapped properly to ensure no infection or foul smell spreads around.
- Have bath regularly.
- Please be aware of unhygienic tampons as it gives rise to toxic shock syndrome which can be life-threatening.
- Under-garments should always be clean and dry.
- Never take any medication without consulting a medical practitioner. Never insert any unhygienic material in the vagina.

**Activity**

- Dear facilitator, participants will be asked to mention these 10 tips of hygiene on these outlines of hands and carry with them so that they can put them up on their cupboards or display boards to remember.
- The facilitator can repeat this activity twice to check the existing knowledge and current hygiene practices during menstruation before the session, and to check the knowledge gained after the session.

**PRE-MENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS)**

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) occurs in most of the girls and women about a week before the onset of their periods.

There are various physical and mental manifestations of this syndrome:

- There can be mood swings, emotional outbreak, depression, sudden happiness and anger, irritability, abrupt sadness and outbreaks under mental manifestation.
- They may also get acne, tender breasts, bloating, tiredness, craving for food, eating disorder, sleeping disorder, anxiety etc. under physical manifestations.

PMS occurs after ovulation and before menstruation and can interfere with the daily routine. The emotional aspect shifts drastically in general and by making a detailed pattern of it; PMS severity can be diagnosed.

PMS does not occur during pregnancy and after Menopause (in absence of menses).

**Key messages for participants to take home with them:****You can help yourself reduce PMS:**

1. Exercises or other physical activities (yoga, walking, jogging etc.)
2. Healthy food habit that might not include too much oil or spices or fat content.
3. Meditation.
4. Reducing stress.
5. Getting help for Depression.
6. Quitting substance abuse (smoking, drinking, drugs etc.).
7. Intake of lots of water and reducing high-salt diet.
8. Life style modification (easy work hours, doing everything in time- eating, adequate sleeping, physical activity, extra-curricular etc.).
9. Being healthy and happy.
10. Medications as advised by doctor.

