

**Middle School**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Lesson 1**  
**Puberty & Hygiene**

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify physical, social, mental, and emotional changes that occur during puberty. (H1. Se2.6)

<b>5 minutes</b>	<p><b><u>Introduction</u></b></p> <p>Today we are going to be reviewing the changes that happen to our bodies and minds as we grow from children into adults during puberty. You may remember learning about this last year and now is a good time to review this information. Maybe some of us hadn't started puberty when we first learned about it and are starting now or are starting soon. Or maybe we forgot some of the information and need a refresher. Either way, it's time for a review!</p> <p style="color: red;">Remind students of group agreements and anonymous questions procedure.</p> <p><b>Who can remind us, when does puberty typically start?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>For people who are assigned female at birth (people who have a uterus, ovaries, and a vulva), puberty usually starts between ages 8-14.</i></li> <li>• <i>For people who are assigned male at birth (people who have a testicles and a penis), puberty usually starts between ages 10-17.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Who can remind us, what causes puberty to begin?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Puberty starts when the <u>pituitary gland</u> in the brain sends signals to a person's ovaries or testicles and tells them to start producing hormones.</i></li> <li>• <i>These hormones travel through our body and cause our bodies and brains to grow and change.</i></li> </ul>
<b>15 minutes</b>	<p><b><u>Puberty Video Review</u></b></p> <p>We are going to watch a video to review some of the changes that happen during puberty. After the video, we are going to work together to brainstorm a list of all of the changes of puberty on the board.</p> <p style="color: red;">Play the video "Puberty and You" (13:05) <a href="https://youtu.be/eHGhCoquwY0">https://youtu.be/eHGhCoquwY0</a></p>
<b>25 minutes</b>	<p><b><u>Physical, Social, Emotional Changes Brainstorm</u></b></p> <p>Now we are going to brainstorm a list of all of the changes that happen during puberty. We are going to place the changes into three categories, based on person's anatomy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first category is for changes that happen to people who are assigned male at birth. This refers to people who are born with a penis and testicles. Remember, people who are assigned male at birth can have any gender identity. They can identify as a boy, a girl, non-binary, agender, or another identity. For the purposes of this activity, we are talking about a person's anatomy and their body, not their gender identity.</li> <li>• The second category is for changes that happen to people who are assigned female at birth. This refers to people who are born with a vulva, uterus, and ovaries. Again,</li> </ul>

people who are assigned female at birth can have any gender identity. They can identify as a girl, a boy, non-binary, agender, or another identity. For the purposes of this activity, we are talking about a person's anatomy and their body, not their gender identity.

- The third category is for changes that happen to most all people, regardless of their anatomy and body.

Write headings on board. Ask the class to recall changes mentioned in the video and identify the category in which they should be placed.

After each change is mentioned, highlight the talking points below unless mentioned by the class.

Assigned Male (A person with a penis and testicles)	Assigned Female (A person with a vagina, uterus, and ovaries)	Everybody
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoulders broaden</li> <li>• *Facial hair growth*</li> <li>• Sperm production and ejaculation</li> <li>• Nocturnal Emissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hips widen</li> <li>• *Breast development*</li> <li>• Ovulation and menstruation</li> <li>• Vaginal discharge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting taller</li> <li>• Acne, oily hair &amp; skin</li> <li>• Body odor</li> <li>• Body hair growth (Pubic and underarm)</li> <li>• *Voice deepening*</li> <li>• Genitals enlarge</li> <li>• Erections</li> <li>• Crushes and attraction</li> <li>• Self-consciousness</li> <li>• Mood Swings</li> </ul>

*\*\*Breast development, facial hair growth, and voice deepening can happen to people of any sex.*

- Breast development- People assigned male at birth typically have some breast development during puberty, however it usually disappears within a year or so.
- Facial hair growth- Sometimes, people assigned female at birth may grow some facial hair as well, though it is not as common. *(Often due to PCOS)*
- Voice deepening- While this is more noticeable in people who are male, everyone's voice does get deeper during puberty. As our bodies are growing, our larynx (our voice box) in our throat grows too.

**Talking Points:**

Assigned Male

- **Shoulders Broaden-** This is a skeletal change.
- **Facial Hair Growth-** The amount of hair a person gets on their face and body is genetic (inherited from biological family). Some people choose to shave their facial hair. **Emphasize razor safety.**
- **Sperm Production & Ejaculation-** During puberty, the testicles begin to produce sperm cells. Sperm are microscopic cells that can start a pregnancy. Sperm cells come out of the penis in a fluid called semen. This is called ejaculation. Ejaculation

can happen when a person touches their penis in a way that feels good to them (sometimes called masturbation).

- **Nocturnal Emission-** When ejaculation happens during sleep, this is called a nocturnal emission, or a wet dream. This is very normal. Not everyone experiences nocturnal emission, it's healthy either way. If nocturnal emission happens, a person may need to put their underwear/sheets in the wash.

### Assigned Female

- **Hips Widen-** The hips and pelvis adjust in order to support the growth of a potential pregnancy.
- **Breast Development-** Breasts can come in different shapes, sizes, and colors. It is normal for one breast to be larger than the other. Some people choose to start wearing bras to support their breasts- this is up to you to decide.
- **Ovulation and Menstruation-** Also known as "having a period." Ovulation is a word for when an egg is released from an ovary. The egg, or ova, is a tiny reproductive cell that can start a pregnancy if it meets a sperm cell. The egg cell travels to the fallopian tube. If it meets a sperm cell, the sperm will fertilize the egg.
  - Sperm can get to the uterus and fallopian tube during penis-in-vagina sex. There are a few different ways that people can have sex, and penis-in-vagina sex is the type that can start a pregnancy if an ejaculation happens in the vagina.
  - The fertilized egg will travel to the uterus and implant in the wall of the uterus to start a pregnancy. But if the egg cell does not meet a sperm cell, the lining of the uterus, which is made of blood, will leave the body through the vagina. This is called menstruation.
  - A period typically lasts between 3-8 days and they tend to come about once a month. Some periods are shorter, some are longer. Some periods have more blood, some have less. People can use pads, tampons, and other period products to absorb/collect the blood so it doesn't get on their clothes. **Mention where period products are available in the school.**
- **Vaginal Discharge-** Vaginal discharge is a white or clear fluid that comes out of the vagina. It is healthy and normal. Sometimes it might be pink or brown before/after a period. Vaginal discharge is the vagina's way of cleaning itself. You should only clean the vulva with water, body washes and soaps can cause irritation.

### Everybody

- **Getting Taller-** Most of our growing happens while we sleep.
- **Acne, oily hair & skin-** Acne happens when the oils on our skin mix with bacteria and get trapped in our pores (small divots in the skin). Washing your face twice a day can help but may not prevent acne altogether. There are also several topical products that can help (*salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide*) and doctors can prescribe medication for acne. Some people may notice more oils in their hair during puberty and may choose to shampoo more often (this depends greatly on your hair type.)
- **Body Odor-** During puberty, a new type of sweat gland in our body becomes active and the sweat from these glands can produce a pretty stinky body odor when it mixes with bacteria on our skin. **What do people do to help prevent this odor?**  
*Deodorant, frequent showers.*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Body Hair Growth-</b> Pubic hair grows around a person’s genitals (on/around the outer labia, around the base of the penis). Underarm hair grows in the armpits. This hair may be thicker or a different color from the hair on a person’s head. Some people choose to shave underarm and body hair, some people choose not to. <b>Emphasize razor safety.</b></li> <li>• <b>Voice deepening-</b> As our bodies are growing, our larynx (our voice box) in our throat grows too. Sometimes as our voice is deepening, it may make a ‘cracking’ noise. This isn’t something a person can control, so we shouldn’t tease one another.</li> <li>• <b>Genitals Enlarge-</b> During puberty our bodies grow bigger, and our genitals (penis and vulva) grow in size too. This may be more noticeable for someone with a penis, but the vulva grows in size as well.</li> <li>• <b>Erections-</b> An erection is when the penis or clitoris fills with blood and gets harder and bigger. During puberty, erections start to happen more frequently. Sometimes erections may happen when someone is thinking about something sexual, and often during puberty, erections happen for no apparent reason.</li> <li>• <b>Crushes &amp; Attraction-</b> Crushes and attraction to other people may become more intense at puberty or later on. People may have crushes on people of the same gender or the opposite gender.</li> <li>• <b>Self-Consciousness-</b> During puberty, people may start to worry more about what other people think of them. Remember that what other people think about you is nowhere near as important as how you think of yourself!</li> <li>• <b>Mood Swings-</b> Mood swings during puberty are common and can be caused by hormones. <b>Ask students to provide an example of a mood swing. When might someone want to see a doctor or counselor about their mood?</b> <i>Feeling very sad, hopeless, or worthless could be warning signs of a mental health problem.</i></li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p>(If time remains)</p> <p>Collect and answer anonymous questions.</p>