



**Title: Getting to know your body: Self-examination/Sexual Problems**

**Level: SENIOR**

**Links to Curriculum for Excellence**

| Experiences and outcomes  | Benchmarks   |
|---|--|
| <p>I understand my own body’s uniqueness, my developing sexuality, and that of others. HWB 4-47a</p> <p>Using what I have learned I am able to make informed decisions and choices that promote and protect my own and others’ sexual health and wellbeing. HWB 4-47b</p> <p>I know how to access services, information and support if my sexual health and wellbeing is at risk. I am aware of my rights in relation to sexual health including my right to confidentiality, and my responsibilities, including those under the law. HWB 4-48a</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains how to access both local and national information, guidance and help.</li> </ul> |

**Learning Intentions**

- Young people learn the importance of self-examination of breasts and testicles.
- Young people have factual information about common sexual problems.
- Young people know how to access services, information and support in terms of their sexual health and wellbeing.

**Success Criteria**

- I can undertake a self-examination of breasts/testicles.
- I am aware of common sexual problems.
- I know how to find and to access sexual health services.

**Resources to support this activity**

- PowerPoint slides
- The final slide requires the teacher/educator to identify local GP or sexual health services.
- Understanding your own breasts: Self-examination (produced by Nuffield Health: duration 4 minutes 12 seconds): <https://vimeo.com/261555966>
- How to perform a testicular self-examination The Robin Cancer Trust (duration 2 minutes) [https://youtu.be/NvDglB\\_HXyE](https://youtu.be/NvDglB_HXyE)
- Prop: set of information cards on sexual problems – one set per small group.

## Activity

This is an activity in 3 parts – the title of the session highlights that emphasis should be placed on young people spending time, on their own, getting to know their body. The first part supports learning about self-examination of breasts and testicles; the second part explains that sex should be a pleasurable experience and discusses the clitoris and penis and their role in orgasm; the third part highlights some of the most common sexual problems that both women and men can experience. The purpose of these different elements of the activity is to equip young people with enough information to recognise when they should seek medical help. The activity will emphasise that when there is pain, including during sexual activity, this should be something that a person should share with their GP or at a sexual health clinic.

- 1. (Part 1) Getting to know your body: Self-examination of breasts and testicles** Introduce the first part of the session as being an opportunity for young people to learn a bit more about their bodies and how to look after their breasts and testicles. Explain that people are encouraged to examine their own breast and testicles to make sure they are problem free. Ask if anyone has heard about self-examination of breasts or testicles and explore what the young people might have heard – while you may want to question/flag any concerns about serious misinformation, stress that the session will clarify any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge.
- 2. 5 things about your breasts.** Explain that the first thing to do before thinking more about how a person would check their breasts is to remind everyone about some key things about breasts. Share the 2 slides, checking understanding as you go. Then, watch the short film and take any thoughts or questions in order to clarify understanding.

### **Getting to know your body: 5 things about your breasts**

- Your breasts change constantly throughout your life from puberty and through your adult life.
- Everyone's breasts look and feel different
- Some people have lumpy breasts, or one breast larger than the other, or breasts that are different shapes.
- If you have periods your breasts may feel heavier and fuller before your period. Before or during your period they may be tender or lumpy. After a period, this usually lessens or disappears altogether, although some women have tender, lumpy breasts all the time.
- When you check your breasts, try to be aware of any changes that are different *for you*. If something has changed or you have a worry about your breasts go to your GP. So, get to know your breasts!

### **Self-examination - Here's how to do it**

Understanding your own breasts: Self-examination (produced by Nuffield Health: duration 4 minutes 12 seconds): <https://vimeo.com/261555966>

NOTE: One question that may arise is whether a man can get breast cancer. The answer is yes they can, and so men should also examine their breasts for changes or pay attention to any pain and seek help. The focus is mostly on women as they are more likely to have breast cancer.

3. **5 things about your testicles.** Take a similar approach with information, then the film about self-examination of testicles.

**Getting to know your body: 5 things about your testicles**

- Your testicles will grow in the early stages of puberty, between the ages of 10 to 13. As your testicles grow, the skin around the scrotum - the sac that holds the testicles - will darken, hang down, and begin to develop hair.
- Everyone's testicles look and feel different
- Don't worry if one testicle is bigger than the other or if one hangs lower than the other. That's normal.
- If you have any pain or swelling around your testicles you should go to the GP.
- It is important to know how your testicles usually look and feel. That way, you can spot any changes that are different *for you*. If something has changed or you have a worry about your testicles go to your GP. So, get to know your testicles!

**Self-examination - Here's how to do it**

How to perform a testicular self-examination The Robin Cancer Trust (duration 2 minutes) [https://youtu.be/NvDglB\\_HXyE](https://youtu.be/NvDglB_HXyE)

4. **(Part 2) Getting to know your body: the clitoris and the penis**

Explain that shortly the young people will be learning a bit about sexual problems, but to understand those it's helpful to learn a bit more about the clitoris and the penis and think about pleasure. This is because masturbation and sex between consenting people should be a pleasurable experience. Use the slides to share some facts about the clitoris and the penis – this may generate some surprise, some laughter and questions.

**The clitoris and pleasure. Did you know?**

- The clitoris is an erectile hooded organ. It contains a high level of nerve endings and is sensitive to stimulation.
- It is responsible for stimulating female orgasm.
- It is the only organ in the human body that exists exclusively for pleasure.
- The clitoris has erectile tissue that swells when aroused. The clitoris' blood supply enables it to engorge continuously — allowing anybody with a clitoris to experience multiple orgasms.
- When a female has an orgasm, this typically lasts longer than the male, at an average of around 13- 51 seconds.

**The penis and pleasure: Did you know?**

- When a man is stimulated physically or psychologically, he gets an erection. Blood flows into the corpora - the spongy tissue running the length of the penis - causing the penis to grow in size and become rigid. The testicles are drawn up toward the body as the scrotum tightens.
- Many men consider the underside of the glans (head) of the penis and the underside of the shaft to be most sensitive to sexual pleasure.
- The average male orgasm lasts for 10-30 seconds.

6. **(Part 3) Getting to know your body: Sexual problems.** Explain that this part of the session gives information about sexual problems that people can experience. Explain that there is no assumption that young people are in sexual relationships; whether they are or not this is about raising awareness and remembering that good help and support is available. Use the slide by way of introduction and ensure understanding. As you do, discuss/explain the importance of thinking about both physical factors (your body) and psychological factors (your feelings, emotions and mental health) when it comes to sexual problems. In doing so this emphasises a common message in RSHP learning that sex is both a physical thing and an emotional thing.

**Many people have problems with sex at some stage in their life.**

To understand the reasons behind any problem, both physical and psychological factors have to be considered, including the person's relationship with a partner. Sexual problems can affect any person - straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

7. **Information cards:** Use the sets of cards (one per small group) with the different sexual problems defined. Ask the young people to read them together in a small group, identifying any questions they might have as they go. Acknowledge that there is quite a lot of information, the young people are not expected to be 'experts' on any problem, the point is to raise awareness. After enough time bring everyone together again and explore any questions. If there are points/questions that can't be clarified or answered, take a note and come back to the class next session, or to an individual, as necessary.

**Loss of sex drive - this can also be called loss of libido or loss of desire:** This is a common problem that affects many people. It is often linked to relationship issues, stress or tiredness, but can be a sign of an underlying medical problem, such as reduced hormone levels. Everyone's sex drive is different – there's no such thing as "normal". But if you find your lack of desire for sex distressing or it's affecting a relationship, it's a good idea to get help.

**Erectile dysfunction (impotence):** This is when a man can't get, or keep, an erection. Most men experience it at some time in their life.

**Premature ejaculation:** This is when a man ejaculates (comes) sooner than he wants to during sex. It's only a problem if it bothers him or his partner.

**Problems achieving orgasm:** Some women don't need to have an orgasm to enjoy sex, but not being able to reach orgasm can be a problem for some women and their partners.

**Pain during sex: Vaginismus** This is when the vagina suddenly tightens up just as you try to insert something into it. It can be painful and distressing. Occasionally, you can get vaginismus even if you have previously enjoyed painless penetrative sex. Vaginismus doesn't necessarily affect your ability to get aroused and enjoy other types of sexual contact.

**Pain during sex: Vulvodynia** The main symptom is persistent pain in and around the vulva. The vulva usually looks normal. It is thought it may be the result of a problem with the nerves supplying the vulva.

**Endometriosis** Many times, endometriosis has no symptoms. When symptoms are present, they may include abdominal cramps or back pain during menstruation, menstrual cramps, heavy bleeding during periods, painful bowel movements or urination, especially during menstruation, painful sex and difficulty becoming pregnant.

**Vaginal dryness:** You may have vaginal dryness if you feel sore or itchy in and around your vagina or feel pain or discomfort during sex or need to pee more often than usual or keep getting urinary tract infections or if you aren't aroused during sex.

8. **To conclude** this part of the activity share and discuss the final slides. Take some time when it comes to talking about help or information and local services to ensure young people understand that services will welcome their approach with concerns about breasts/testicles or sexual problems.

#### Things to remember

- Spend time getting to know your body, especially breasts and testicles.
- Spend time on all parts of your body, focussing on what feels good.
- Get to know what is normal for you, and if something doesn't feel right, if you are worried, if you have pain, speak to your GP or to someone at a sexual health clinic.
- Sex should never be painful. It should not be distressing. If you are experience pain or distress during sex please speak to your GP or someone at a sexual health clinic.

#### Help and information:

*Insert local information*

#### Additional ideas/materials

- Colleagues at University of Edinburgh have produced an animation about endometriosis. The animation was funded by Endo Warriors West Lothian, a local awareness and support group. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/inflammation-research/information-public/videos-resources/endometriosis-animation>
- The **Robin Care Cancer Trust** <https://www.therobincancertrust.org/> states their mission is to raise awareness, reduce embarrassment and save lives. They raise awareness of testicular and ovarian cancers in young adults.
- Information from the NHS: How should I check my breasts? <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/womens-health/how-should-i-check-my-breasts/>
- Testicles FAQ <https://teens.webmd.com/boys/testicles-faq#2>
- Female sexual problems, information from the NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/female-sexual-problems/>
- Male sexual problems, information from the NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/male-sexual-problems/>
- Vaginal dryness: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaginal-dryness/>
- Loss of libido <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/loss-of-libido/>

## Practitioner Notes

