



**Title: My Body**  
**Part 2: My body is changing (including menstruation)**

**Level: SECOND**

**Links to Curriculum for Excellence**

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
I recognise that how my body changes can affect how I feel about myself and how I may behave. HWB 2-47a I can describe the physical and emotional changes during puberty, understand why they are taking place and the importance of personal hygiene. HWB 2-48a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses correct terminology for all private body parts and reproductive organs, for example, breasts, clitoris.</li> <li>• Describes the physical and emotional changes during puberty including erections, wet dreams, pubic hair, masturbation, menstruation, hormones, mood swings.</li> <li>• Identifies strategies to manage emotions, for example, relaxation techniques, speaking to someone, taking time out.</li> <li>• Describes ways of keeping hygienic during puberty.</li> </ul>

The learning intentions and success criteria are met with delivery of all parts of this topic.

**Learning intentions**

- Children learn the correct names for parts of their body, including male and female genitalia, and their functions.
- Children recognise that body changes with puberty impact on feelings and behaviour.
- Children learn strategies to manage emotions.
- Children understand the importance of personal hygiene.

**Success criteria**

- I can name parts of my body.
- I can talk about the different parts of my body and what they do.
- I can describe the changes that take place with puberty.
- I can talk about my growing independence.
- I can talk about things I can do when I am upset and can identify an adult to speak to if I am upset.
- I understand how to maintain personal hygiene.

**Resources to support this activity.**

- PowerPoint Slides

NOTE: This learning activity is described as one session, however some learners might benefit from splitting this lesson, taking points 1 to 6 in the plan in the first instance, then working from point 7 where the activity starts to address menstruation and other important body changes. PowerPoints provided can be adapted to suit your learners and any alternative delivery plan.

## Activity

1. Introduce the session as being about how the children's bodies change as they grow up – the activity is concerned largely with *physical changes*; the next activity explores feelings and emotions. Start with a question and chat with a partner – identifying 5 things each: *Can you name 5 ways your body has changed since you were a baby?*
2. After some feedback (some things mentioned might refer to the previous learning) recap on learning from the last activity, remember talking and learning about parts of the body, the private parts that you can see called genitals and the internal parts that are connected called reproductive organs. Explain that as the children are growing these parts of their bodies grow up too.
3. Then, share the question '**What is puberty?**' on the smartboard: read through the slide and check understanding. There may be questions, some of which you will want to answer immediately, some that you might want to leave until later - have a paper/flipchart on the wall to one side, explain this is where any questions about puberty can be noted down, assure children you will come back to them at some point today or later.

**What is puberty?** Puberty is the time in your life when your body begins to change. Some changes you can see. Some changes happen inside your body. You can't see these. You can have stronger emotions and new feelings.

4. Tell the children that one question that children often ask is "**when will puberty happen to me?**" Introduce this on the slide, read it to the children. Stress that there is no rush when it comes to puberty, everyone is different and unique, but we are talking about it now so that we understand the changes when they do happen.

**When will puberty happen to me?** Puberty changes happen over several years. Usually between the ages of 9 and 16. Some changes in your body might be happening now, some will happen later. This is different for everybody.

5. **Hormones:** A slide to explain that the changes are driven by hormones if this is too much information edit/skip. (Some children might want to explore this more later!)

**Hormones:** All the changes that happen during puberty are caused by chemicals in your body. These chemicals are called hormones. When your body is ready to begin puberty, your pituitary (say: pih-TOO-uh-ter-ee) gland (a pea-shaped gland located at the bottom of your brain) releases these special hormones. Depending on whether you're a boy or a girl, these hormones go to work on different parts of the body.

6. **When we go through puberty what happens to...** Introduce the next task along these lines: Let's think about some of the changes that happen to boys and girls with puberty. Ask children to work with a shoulder partner to identify some of these changes. After a few minutes, rather than feedback use the subsequent slides to explore each area: Hair/Skin/Body shape/Breasts/Voices/Smell. Any surprises or questions?
7. **Introducing menstruation and other physical changes.** Move on along these lines: Children have talked about some of the changes that happen to both girls and boys with puberty. A lot of these changes happen on the outside of our bodies, things we can see. But changes also happen on the inside. Use the slide as an introduction:

**Puberty:** Some changes that happen to boys and girls are to get your body ready to have a baby when you grow up, if you want to.

8. **Periods.** Explain that for girls, a change with puberty is that they can start their period. Use the next 3 slides provided and talk through with the children. Take your time, remember to encourage discussion and acknowledge what children already know. Remember, the question sheet can be used to keep a *note* of questions the children ask that, if not now, can be answered later. (Links to Hey Girls resources are given earlier, you can decide if you want to extend the learning at this point or in further/follow up work).

**Periods:** When a girl goes through puberty her ovaries release an egg every month. For a few days each month blood and other fluids pass out through the girl's vagina. There can be some fluids called pre-period discharge before the period starts. Periods are also called menstruation. When a girl has her period, she wears a sanitary towel or tampon, period pants or menstrual cup to absorb the fluid. During a period, girls can feel that it is a bit painful or uncomfortable. It is important to know that a girl can still do anything she wants when having her period. Girls start having their period at different ages. Every girl is different and unique!

9. **Erections.** Explain that changes also happen to boys. Explain these changes can happen anytime from now, to when a boy is older. Use the slide to give information and encourage conversation.

**Erections:** An erection is when the boy's penis goes hard and sticks out from his body. Erections are normal. They can happen at any time. They can last a few minutes or a bit longer. After a while the erection will stop, and the penis will be soft again.

10. **Wet dreams.** The slide explains what these are, for both girls and boys.

**Wet dreams:** When a boy is asleep, he can get an erection. He might ejaculate. Ejaculation is when semen comes out of the boy's erect penis. When a girl is asleep her vulva can become wet and slippery. Not everyone has wet dreams but if you do this is normal.

11. **Touching your private parts:** The slide explains (see NOTE below)

Some children touch their penis or vulva because it can be soothing or enjoyable. This is okay. This should only be done in private. And remember that your private parts are private, no-one else should touch them.

**NOTE:**

- a. This slide/text acknowledges that when children touch their genitals at this age it is soothing, this is not a consciously sexual process for children who have not reached puberty. We do not suggest you use the word masturbation, because if the activity is being delivered to a group of children who are likely to not have gone through puberty (say in P5), this touching could be misunderstood to be about a sexual activity. However, children are exposed to language and other influences and so if the word masturbation is mentioned by a child or a child asks if this is masturbation, this can be acknowledged as such.
- b. You may have already discussed touch and private parts; this is covered in more detail in other activities at First and Second Level. The messages in those lessons are reinforced in the slide, verbally you can add as in those other activities: *Your parent or carer may ask you about your private parts or see them, to help you learn or keep clean or if you are not well. When you are with your parent or carer a doctor or nurse might ask to see your private parts. No-one else should ask to see or touch your private parts.*

12. **Pause and review.** Pause for questions/clarification. If any questions have been written up on the question sheet/poster to the side, this would be the time to review them. If there are any questions you are not sure about as teacher/educator that's okay, be honest with the children and say you are not sure, but you will find out the best answer that you can for the next lesson.
13. Ask the children to work with a partner to think about this question: **What have we learned about today that's most interesting for you?** Get some feedback around the room – acknowledging how interesting and important all this learning about puberty is.
14. **End by recognising that after thinking about it a bit, there might be more questions that children would like to ask.** Remind them that they can ask someone at home or can ask you. If you have books from the recommended reading lists in the class library share these and encourage children to read them in class.

### Additional ideas

Make some of the recommended books on these topics available in the class library. Show the children that these books are available and encourage them to have a look when there is free time or reading time.

Recommended reading:

- Usborne Facts of Life: Growing Up ISBN-10: 0746031424
- What's Happening to Me (Girls Edition) Facts of Life (Usborne ISBN-10: 0746069952) also available digitally ISBN-10: 0746069952
- What's Happening to Me (Boys) Facts of Life (Usborne ISBN-10: 0746076630)

This information may be of use for you and for parents/carers:

- Taking care of your body: answers for boys with autism: <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/autism-hygiene-boy.html>
- Your changing body: answers for boys with autism: <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/autism-puberty-boy.html>
- Taking care of your body: answers for girls with autism: <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/autism-hygiene-girls.html>
- Your changing body: answers for girls with autism: <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/autism-puberty.html>

### Connecting with home

*The text below could be used to communicate with home about the activities in this short block of learning.*

The children are working on the topic of **my body**. They are learning about how their body changes with puberty. To help the children understand puberty's main changes, they have been learning about menstruation (a girl having their period) and about erections/wet dreams. We learn about these things now so that children understand that they do not need to worry about the changes that will happen. The children are being encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if they have any questions or worries. If you would like to help your child continue their learning at home, you may find the following books and websites useful.

This is a good article to read yourself or with your child: <http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/puberty.html>

The local library should be able to get these books for you:

- Usborne Facts of Life: Growing Up ISBN-10: 0746031424

- What's Happening to Me (Girls Edition) Facts of Life (Usborne ISBN-10: 0746069952) also available digitally ISBN-10: 0746069952
- What's Happening to Me (Boys) Facts of Life (Usborne ISBN-10: 0746076630)

**Further learning activities are available that connect to this RSHP curriculum content**

- Names of parts of the body and their functions
- Feelings and puberty
- Personal hygiene

**Practitioner Notes**

