

## Puberty – an extra introduction for girls

Things to be aware of...

Good news: Your changes during puberty will almost certainly happen before the changes in the boys around you. The female body does this. Mostly this is a good thing: you are likely to grow taller and feel a bit more grown up before the boys around you start to go through their version of the same thing. Please don't start thinking this means that you **are** now grown up and the boys aren't – this is just the changes to your body. Being grown up needs a grown up brain as well.

Bad news: the boys will catch up. In the end, most young men are a little taller and a little more muscular than most young women.

Your **menstruation** and the **period** you have each month are in one way completely private to you but at the same time absolutely nothing to ever be ashamed of. If we could get to the point where boys, girls, men and women could all have conversations that mention periods without both the men and the women feeling uncomfortable talking about them then the world would be a better and more grown up place. I'm sad to say that most boys and men are still rubbish at coping with such conversations and so everyone gets all shy about it. This certainly isn't your fault though!

Your experience of having a period will not be the same as those of other girls and women around you. For some it is short and straightforward each month, for others it is uncomfortable and goes on for several days. Don't ever think that what you hear from another girl about what she experiences **should** be happening to you – it is not like that and never has been. Just be sympathetic with those who suffer more than you do!

Some good news: you are not likely to need or want to shave your face or anywhere else very often at all. And don't ever get strange hang-ups about body hair: every person on Earth has quite a lot of it! Meanwhile, some boys and men do end up needing to shave their chins every day just to look tidy for school or work and this is a real drag for them.

When the boys you know start to go through puberty, be aware that some of what they go through – the clearest examples being their voices dropping and their penises almost randomly stiffening (becoming **erect**) out of sight in their trousers – makes them feel a bit confused and a bit shy. Never ever get personal or tease at this stage: they have weird things happening and so do you.

Generally **be respectful and kind to everyone** coping with the weirdness of body changes during puberty.