

## Puberty - An extra introduction for boys

This is a bad news, good news, good news, bad news, bad news note...

Bad news: Girls almost always go through puberty first, perhaps a year-and-a-half before boys – though it varies quite a lot. This means that some girls do get quite snooty about ‘being more grown-up than the boys’. And there tends to be a short phase where girls are suddenly seeming taller than they were and taller than a lot of the boys.

Good news: You do catch up and usually end up taller and (a bit) more muscular than the girls.

Good news: You don’t ever **menstruate**. This means you don’t have monthly **periods**. Girls will always be (very sensibly) quite shy about their own periods because it can be really uncomfortable and there is some very private bleeding going on slowly for a few days each month. It would help if boys and girls (and men and women) were able to cope with normal conversations about this but we still don’t seem to have got over the issue yet. Don’t ever be silly about periods: **be respectful and kind** and don’t ever butt in when the girls don’t want you to.

Bad news: You may end up shaving a lot! Women have very little facial hair; men have quite a lot. Some young men have fast growing facial hair and end up shaving every single day – which is a real drag. You can end up spending about a day-and-a-half of each year shaving (a few minutes each day)!

Bad news: Once puberty is underway, there will be times – even when you are asleep!! – that your penis will behave in surprising ways, usually by becoming stiff (erect) when you weren’t expecting it to. At first this can be quite embarrassing, even though no-one but you knows it is happening. But at least this is a sign that everything is working. Also, if you ever manage to wet the bed in a strange way while asleep during the changes of puberty, don’t worry because this is a sign that even more of the system is working properly. It soon stops happening like that.