

# Puberty Prep

for Pro-active Parents

by

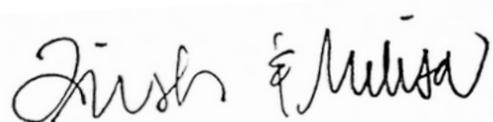
# GIRL·ology<sup>®</sup>

*"She's not a baby anymore...  
where's all the help and advice now?"  
(says every mom we know)*

Raising a daughter through the challenging years of puberty & adolescence didn't come with a guide. So, we built it.

Our Puberty Prep ebook will help prepare you - so you're ready when she is! As early as 3rd grade, some girls will begin to show signs of puberty. Knowing what's ahead will help her navigate body changes with less anxiety and more confidence.

As two physician moms with 5 daughters between us, we are here to help you build a stronger mother-daughter connection, be her best guide, and raise a confident, informed and healthy girl.



Trish (pediatrician) &  
Melisa (pediatric & adolescent gyn)  
Girlology Co-Founders

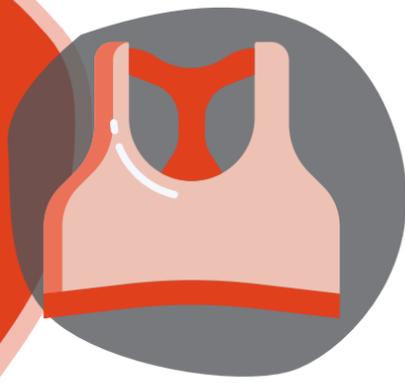


FEAR LESS. KNOW MORE.

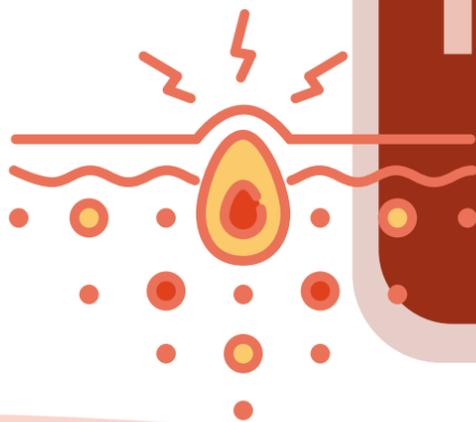
# Did You Know?

THE VERY 1ST SIGN OF PUBERTY IS RAPID GROWTH OF FEET & HANDS!

After that,  
**85%** of girls start with breast buds



**11 years**  
the average age girls develop  
**acne**



**76%** of girls report schools teach them more about the biology of frogs than the human female body.

**99%** of girls experience mood swings during puberty.

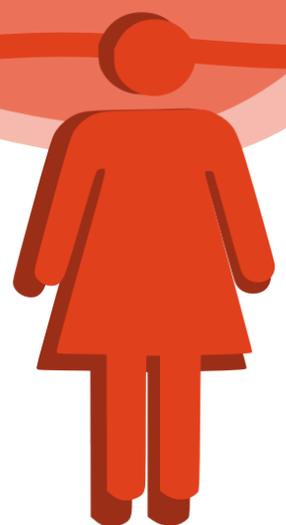
**< 1 minute**  
the average time healthcare providers spend discussing puberty at well child visits.



**88% OF MOMS**  
ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR DAUGHTER'S CONFIDENCE & BODY IMAGE.

**1985**

The first time someone said the word "period" on national television. The word was banned on TV until 1972! (btw, Courtney Cox said it first!)



**Puberty Prep** *for Pro-active Parents*

# What's Inside?

**What should I do FIRST?**

**What IS puberty, anyway?**

**A Puberty Timeline**

**What are other parents asking?**

**Myths Busted**

**Where to Find Support**

# What Should I Do FIRST?

## Step 1: Prepare Yourself

### Your Puberty vs HERS

How did you feel about YOUR OWN puberty?



frustrated



confused



worried



embarrassed



clueless



pleased



excited

What made it feel that way?

### If you want her to feel...



calm



informed



supported



confident



excited

### Here's how you can prepare

*(and we're here to help)*



**Unpack** as much shame & embarrassment as you can. If you need help from a friend or even a professional, it's worth it!



**Get comfortable** using correct words for all of her body parts.



**Learn the facts** about what's ahead for her (keep reading).



Practice some parenting skills that help you **stay calm** when she's not (we have tips).



Choose a **positive mindset** before you start talking to her.

# What Should I Do FIRST?

## Step 2: Work On Your Words



### PROTECT HER

*Children who know the proper names for the parts of their genitals are less likely to experience childhood sexual abuse.*



### CREATE BODY AGENCY

*Knowing her body and how it works helps her feel more in control of it and provides the language to communicate more effectively about her body.*



### BOOST CONFIDENCE

*Children love learning about their bodies - ALL of their parts! Body knowledge builds body confidence by raising awareness and reducing confusion.*

## So...NIX the Nicknames

*It's not a front fanny, a pee pee, a coochie, a cookie, or a hoo ha. It's not even a vagina.*

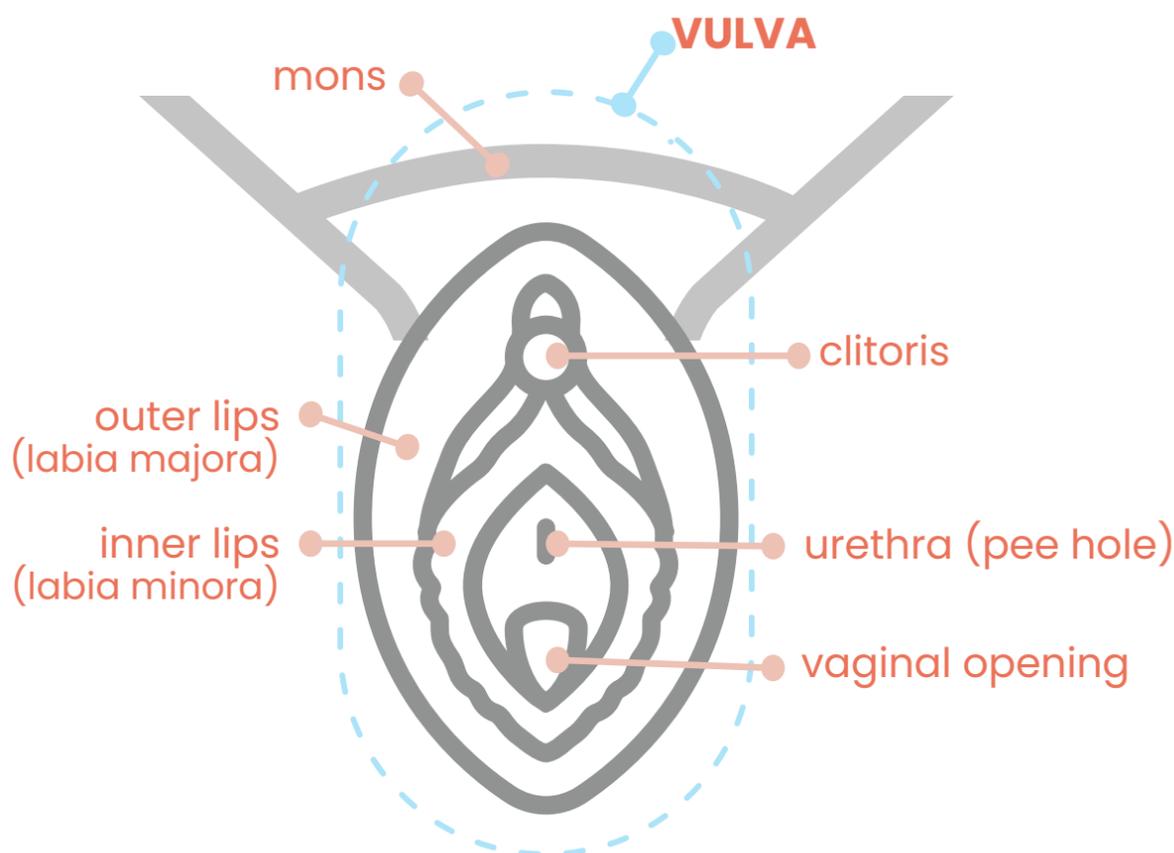
Just like you taught her the correct names for the parts of her face, you can also teach her the correct names for the parts of her VULVA.

That's right -- VULVA.

Everything "down there" is not a vagina. The vagina is mostly inside the body, so it's just the vaginal opening that's "down there."

So, teach her that her VULVA is the name for *all* the private parts down below, and it has lots of parts like the mons, clitoris, outer lips, inner lips, and two openings: the urethra (for pee) and the vagina (where babies come out).

While you're at it, don't forget to teach her anus (which is not part of the vulva), and breasts (which...oh you know where those are!).



# What Should I Do FIRST?

## Step 3: Practice Your Positivity

As she becomes a big kid, she will be more affected by big emotions -- hers and yours. This is a perfect time to practice strategies that will help you model calm and positive communication in the years ahead.



### **When she's curious, join her!**

Her curiosity is natural and healthy (and she's getting old enough to know when you're not being truthful)! So take a deep breath, and get curious about HER curiosity. Ask her what made her think to ask that? What does she already know about that? Then fill in the gaps with the truth.

### **She stinks, but you don't want to embarrass her.**

When it comes to a her changing body, her brain is dialing up her sensitivity and self-consciousness. It's perfectly fine to let her know she's sending out some strong new odors, but tell her privately, normalize it, and offer some matter-of-fact advice that will help her feel aware and confident. It's better for her to hear it from you than as a joke among her peers.

### **Her BIG emotions are making YOU emotional!**

Eyerolls and moodiness can bring out the big emotions in all of us, but you can commit to being the calm presence in her life. Breathe. Walk away. Count to ten. Practice listening without judgment. Respond with a calm face and voice. It takes practice, but it makes a world of difference in keeping you connected.

### **You had a *horrible* puberty experience.**

As an adult, sometimes we need to accept the things we can't change, and commit to creating a better future for the kids we love. Prepare yourself and preparing her for all that's ahead. She wants to know she's ok, she's normal, and she's not alone. Remind her that these changes are a sign of healthy growth, and show her that she has YOU as a trusted guide.

# What IS Puberty, Anyway?

There's more to this story, but here's a simple science lesson!

Puberty is more than a couple of points in time; it's a transition that takes 5+ years when a child's body morphs into a more adult-like body.

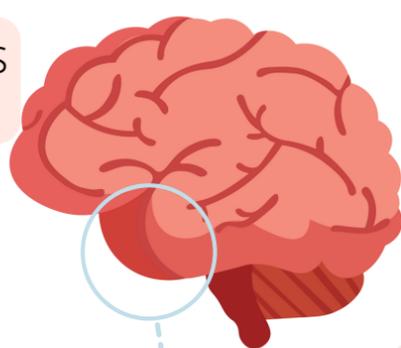
The whole process is controlled by hormones -- *which do not actually rage*, but they travel through the body as chemical messengers, directing a super complicated brain & body construction project.

The whole purpose of puberty is to make it possible to reproduce the species (*have babies*), so puberty isn't just for humans, many animals also go through puberty, too!

Puberty starts in the **brain** with the release of **Gonadotropin** Releasing Hormone (GnRH)

That word literally means "grow some **gonads**!"

In females gonads are **ovaries**.



GnRH travels to the **Pituitary Gland** (also in the brain)

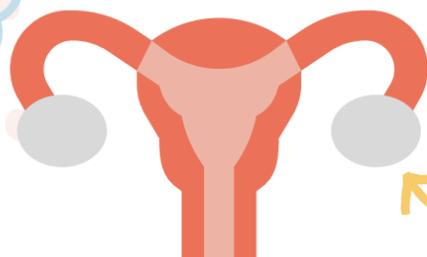
GnRH says,

"Release the gonad-growing hormones!"

The **Pituitary Gland** sends out **FSH & LH**

**FSH** = Follicle Stimulating Hormone  
**LH** = Luteinizing Hormone

In Females, FSH & LH go to the **ovaries**



The **ovaries** begin to release **estrogen & progesterone** (and a bit of **testosterone**) which cause lots of **body changes** and eventually the release of **eggs** through the **menstrual cycle**.

# What Does ALL THAT Mean?

## Her brain is growing & changing *for most girls, that means...*

- Her **emotions** change faster & feel bigger.
- She can think more **abstractly**.
- She seeks **new experiences** that are exciting for her.
- She wants more **independence**.
- She becomes more **self-reflective & self critical**.
- She wants to **fit in but also stand out**.
- She may begin to feel new **attractions**.
- Her **self-confidence** may drop.
- She will be at higher risk for **mental health struggles**.

## Her body is growing & changing

- **Breasts** grow.  
and may be tender or sore
- **Body hair** grows.
- She will likely begin new **hygiene** routines to manage:  
**acne, body odor, body hair, vaginal discharge & periods.**
- Her body **shape** will change and so will her **balance**.
- She will **grow** taller right before your eyes.
- She will begin **menstruating**.
- She will **grow some more**.

*Oh, and she'll need lots of new shoes and clothes.*

**...and YOU are her  
biggest INFLUENCER**

*Are you ready?*

*We're here to help you navigate all of it!*

# A Puberty Timeline

Know What's Ahead

Most girls have similar body changes in puberty, but each will develop on her own unique schedule and with her own unique body. Most will begin puberty sometime between age 8 and 12.

This timeline shows what changes you can expect and in what order. Some girls start with the "androgen" changes instead of the "estrogen" changes, but other than that, the order is similar for everyone.

## The ORDER of things

brain says "Go!"

hands & feet grow fast

*the "real" first sign*

estrogen changes  
breast buds  
vaginal discharge

breast development begins at an average age of 9-10, but the normal range is 8-12

androgen changes  
body odor  
pubic hair  
oily skin, acne

It takes 1.5-3 years from breast buds to first period

rapid growth spurt

*the most accurate predictor of her first period*

first period

first periods begin at an average age of 12, but the normal range is 9-15

curves

more brain changes

ta da!!

moods can be big and change fast

# What moms are asking

## ISN'T SHE TOO YOUNG?

Children of all ages are naturally curious about bodies and how they work, so that's a great place to start young. Unlike older kids and adults, children don't sexualize their body parts or puberty, so talking openly may feel more comfortable for them than for you.

## HOW DO I KNOW SHE'S READY TO LEARN ABOUT PUBERTY?

There are many signs that it's time! Are her classmates showing signs of puberty? Has she been wanting more privacy? Are you noticing body odor? breasts budding? vaginal discharge? Or is she in late 3rd grade or beyond? All of those are great times to offer details that will prepare and reassure her!

## HOW DO I AVOID GIVING HER TOO MUCH INFORMATION?

The goal with young ones is to keep your chats short and simple. They'll let you know if it's too much by losing interest or moving on to another curiosity.

## WHAT IF SHE'S RESISTANT?

There are different reasons why some girls avoid chats about changing bodies. Provide reassurance that you're there for her when she's ready. You can jumpstart fun conversations and boost her curiosity by sharing a few fun facts you are learning from this ebook.

## WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWERS TO HER QUESTIONS?

It's ok if you don't know all the answers! Tell her you're glad she came to you with her question and you'll find the answer together. When it comes to questions about her body, health & wellness, make sure she knows the importance of using trusted resources (not Dr. Google or random influencers). Girlology is here as that resource for thousands of moms & girls throughout the country.

# Puberty Myths – BUSTED!

**Her moodiness is caused by raging hormones!**

Hormones don't rage! Her moods are affected by her very real emotions *and* changes in the way her brain is wired.

**She won't get any taller after she starts her period.**

Sure she will. Her growth just slows down a lot. Expect 1-3 inches more.

**Puberty lasts about 2 years.**

For girls, it's more like 5+ years!

**Most girls start their first period around the same age as their mother.**

BOTH parents' genetics affect the timing of her development. She will actually follow an older sister more closely than her mother. If she doesn't have an older sister - she may surprise you!

**Vaginal discharge means her period will start soon.**

Nope. It's an early puberty thing that begins shortly after breasts bud. Both are caused by estrogen.

**Pimples mean she's not washing her face well enough.**

Pimples mean she's a blooming adolescent with oilier skin and a genetic predisposition.

**During puberty, a knot under the nipple is not normal.**

Knots are how the breasts "bud." One side may bud well before the other.

**Girls don't stink.**

Oh yes they do. New sweat, oils, and bacteria create the odors especially in their pits & privates! Good thing there's an easy solution!

# Where to Find Support



## YOUR VILLAGE

Check in with your friends, especially those with children a year or two ahead of yours. Ask them to share the challenges and victories they're having, as well as what teen trends parents are talking about in your village. Knowing what's "out there" can help you be more proactive in keeping her prepared and protected.



## YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR

But when it comes to making decisions about her health and wellness, don't compromise by trusting what you hear from others or find online. Her doctor is the best source for medically accurate recommendations based on her individual medical history.



## GIRLOLOGY

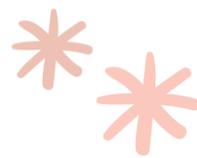
Our girls' health & wellness videos + expert mom-to-mom coaching give you both "bite size" support on every essential topic exactly when you need it.

What's next? Check out our ready-made playlists designed to help you navigate each grade-level. Our Welcome video & Quick Start Guide give you next-step clarity on when and how to begin and what resources we have for you and her at each age and stage.



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