

Male Genital Health & Hygiene

Is This Normal?

Puberty is the time when your body is changing from a child's body to an adult's body. **Hormones** (chemicals produced in your brain and testes) are responsible for all of these developments. Although the changes take place over several years, sometimes it may feel as if you are different from one day to the next. You may feel less developed or farther along than some of your friends, because each person's body changes at his own rate. Don't worry; your own way of developing is right for you.

For boys, puberty starts anywhere from age nine to fifteen. Here are some of the changes you may experience:

- Boys' muscles grow larger during puberty; therefore, your chest and shoulders may appear broader.
- You start to grow hair in new places—on your face, chest, underarms, and on your pubic area. As you get into your late teens, you may want to begin shaving your face.
- Your voice gets deeper. While it's changing, it may crack or squeak.
- Your body produces hormones, which may cause your skin to become oilier. This may cause acne (pimples).
- Your genitals (sex organs) develop. Your penis gets larger, and your testicles grow and start to hang lower.
- Your testicles start to produce sperm, which means you can get someone pregnant.
- You will probably have more frequent erections (hard-ons) and you may start to get wet dreams. It is common for boys to have sexual feelings and thoughts during puberty.

DISCHARGE

is **NOT** normal for guys. Urine and semen are the only things that should come out of the penis. If any other liquid comes out, it could be a sign of infection.

Remember...

At most family planning clinics checkups are **FREE** for teens age 17 and younger. Be sure to call ahead or check in with the CHOICE hotline to make sure the family planning clinic you'd like to go to sees males. Although it's always a good idea to talk to your parents about your sexual health needs, it is not possible for every family. You do **NOT** need your parent or guardian's permission to go to a public health or family planning clinic.

**CHECK
-UPS**

In order to make sure a guy stays healthy, it is important that he has a medical check-up at least once a year, even before he is sexually active for the first time. If a guy has discharge from the penis, burning with urination, a sore or bump on his penis or testicles, or thinks he has a sexually transmitted infection, he should schedule a check-up.

Remember that doctors are required by law to keep personal information confidential, so it is important to be honest when sharing medical information and history with a doctor. This will help the doctor to give you the best care for your body. During an exam, a guy can ask any questions he has about puberty, his body, or his health.

What will happen during the medical exam?

- The doctor will listen to your heart, lungs, chest, back, and possibly examine your abdomen (stomach), eyes, and ears.
- The doctor will check your genitals to make sure that everything is normal.
- He or she will check your testicles for lumps and gently push under your scrotum to feel your prostate gland to be sure it is not enlarged.
- The doctor will then ask you to cough while touching your scrotum (sac). This tests for a hernia (a weak spot in the muscle of the belly that can be dangerous to your internal organs).

Genital Self Exam

Whether you are sexually active or not, it is important to perform a genital self exam once a month. Although testicular and prostate cancers are very rare among young men, it is never too soon to get to know your own body and be sure these areas are healthy on a regular basis. How to perform a genital self exam:

- The best time to do this exam is after a warm shower or bath when the scrotum is soft and the testicles hang away from the body as much as possible.
- While standing in front of a mirror, hold the penis out of the way and examine each testicle separately.
- Hold each testicle between the thumb and fingers of both hands and roll it gently between the fingers.
- Look or feel for any hard lumps or changes in the size or shape of the testes.
- If you find any lumps, unusual changes, or skin irritation, make an appointment to see your doctor right away.

CHOICE

Concerns for Health Options: Information, Care and Education

This fact sheet was produced by CHOICE.
For more information about male genital health and STI's call **215-985-3300**
or visit **www.choice-phila.org** and **www.choiceteens.org**