

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

PUBERTY AND DEVELOPMENT



Puberty is the process when a child matures into a young adult through physical, hormonal, and emotional changes. It can be an exciting and tumultuous period of growth. Parents often want to know how to support their kids through these changes. Knowing what to expect can help parents feel informed and better able to create a safe space for your child to talk about their changing bodies and emotions.

Females often start puberty between 8 to 13 years old.

Males often start puberty between 9 and 14 years old. It can also be normal for kids to start earlier or later.

TIPS

- This is a time when kids feel more peer pressure. Talk to your child about choices they will face about drinking, smoking, drugs, and sex.
- It's never too early to talk to your kids about puberty including nutrition, exercise, and mental health.
- Talk to your kids about social media, cyberbullying and staying safe online.

EMOTIONAL CHANGES

Your child may:

- Be very focused on the way they look and dress
- Care a lot about what their peers think about them
- Become moodier
- Want more privacy
- Focus more on their friends rather than family
- Show less affection toward parents

PHYSICAL CHANGES

- Sexual organs, including growth and the development of pubic hair. Boys can have minor breast growth.
- Growth spurts occur, around age 10-11 for girls, and 12-14 for boys.
- Hair begins to grow and get thicker in the underarms, genital areas, legs, and face.
- A new type of sweat gland develops in armpits and genital areas. When skin bacteria feeds on this, it can lead to body odor.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Please visit [essexpediatrics.com/resources/](https://www.essexpediatrics.com/resources/) for links and additional resources.

How to talk to your kids about puberty

<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/700childrens/2015/06/how-to-talk-with-your-kids-about-puberty>

Information on relationships, identity, bodies, and sex, organized by topic and age <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents>

The Puberty Podcast: science-based strategies for parenting through puberty

RESOURCES FOR KIDS

Website: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/puberty>

Books:

- [Sex is a Funny Word](#) By Cory Silverberg
- [You-Ology: a Puberty Guide for Every Body](#) by Trish Hutchinson, Kathryn Lowe and Melissa Holmes

Podcast:

[That's Totally Normal](#), With Dr. T