

# Boys and Puberty

<b>Objective:</b>	Participants will describe the internal and external changes males experience during puberty.
<b>Structure:</b>	Presentation by educator with large group discussion.
<b>Time:</b>	45 minutes.
<b>Materials:</b>	Blackboard/flipchart; "Male Anatomy" worksheet; male reproductive system resource sheet.

## Procedure

1. **Introduce** the topic by reviewing general male changes and feelings (especially embarrassment) and need for respect. State that:

Although men do not have babies, they are part of reproduction, and thus their reproductive organs must grow and develop to make this possible. Today, we will learn the parts of the reproductive system, and how they change at puberty to make reproduction possible.

2. Ask participants what external changes boys experience during puberty:

- Adam's apple will begin to show
- Shoulders and chest will grow bigger
- Muscles will become bigger
- Hair on face will appear
- Body hairs appears for some boys (e.g. underarms, face, pubic area, later maybe on chest/back)
- Voice changes for some boys
- Testicles gradually grow a little larger
- Penis will grow longer and wider as the rest of the body grows
- Will begin to have erections and "wet dreams"
- Breast development. This fact comes as a surprise to most students. Some boys will find that the area around one or both nipples can feel sore and may swell. This is because boys have some female hormones in their body. The soreness and swelling usually go away. This is normal.
- Feelings of sexual attraction emerge
- Sudden mood changes occur
- Weight gain before growth spurt

3. **Ask** participants:

- Why do some boys get some breast swelling when they are going through puberty?

As a group, discuss the following:

- Someone has some breast swelling. When you change for gym or swimming, other boys are making comments such as “You’re turning into a girl” and “Look at those boobs.” You know this makes your friend feel terrible and it makes you feel bad. What can you do?
4. **Discuss** the external and internal male reproductive organs. You may wish to have students complete the worksheet on labeling the reproductive system during the discussion.

### **External Genitals**

#### *Penis*

- Tube-like organ of spongy tissue (leave rest of information about penis until later)
- Urethra runs lengthwise through centre of penis
- Head of penis is called the glans which is a source of sexual pleasure

#### *Testicles*

- Male sex glands (1-2) held in a sac called the scrotum
- On outside of body to keep temperature cooler than body temperature for healthy sperm production
- Sometimes one can grow faster than the other at puberty
- One hangs lower – this is normal
- Very sensitive area – easily damaged – important to protect e.g. During sports activities
- Never deliberately kick anyone there
- Only need one testicle to be fertile (able to reproduce)
- At puberty, begin to produce hormones and sperm

#### *Sperm*

- Special cells produced in testicle at puberty
- Very small (over 300 million in 15 ml of semen)
- Millions are made every day
- Mix with fluid in glands to form a white sticky fluid called semen
- Swim up vagina, through uterus to fallopian tube to fertilize an egg

## Internal Reproductive Organs

### *Vas Deferens*

- Tube which carries sperm out of testicles

### *Prostate Gland*

- Starts producing a fluid at puberty in which sperm are kept alive
- Sperm + fluid = substance called semen

### *Urethra*

- Tube which is located in penis
- 2 branches – one to bladder, one to vas deferens
- Two substances which come out of the urethra are urine and semen, they cannot come out at the same time
- When penis is ready to release semen, a valve blocks off branch to the bladder so urine cannot escape

### *Seminal Vesicles*

- Two small pouches behind the bladder that produce fluid
- This fluid mixes with sperm and other fluid to produce semen

## 5. **Review** some of the changes at puberty:

(Likely have mentioned some of the changes while explaining Reproductive System.)

- Production of sperm in the testicles
- Growth of penis and testicles
- Production of fluid in the prostate gland

## 6. **Ask** what starts happening more often to a boy's penis at puberty?

**Explain** erections:

- Penis gets bigger, harder, and stands out from the body
- Happens to babies and even before birth

7. **Ask** what erections happen?

- Sexual thoughts send message to penis – thickens and sticks out from body
- Spongy tissue fills up with extra blood
- Happens for physical reasons even before puberty
- Can happen when you least expect it or want it (e.g. First thing in the morning, during sleep, vibrations e.g. Riding a bus, not always related to sexual thoughts.)
- Can be frightening and embarrassing
- Important to realize that it is a normal process of growing up
- An erection does not mean an ejaculation must occur – erection will go away on its own
- Size of penis varies – all sizes work well – less of a difference when erect
- Penis continues to grow as you do

8. **Lead** a discussion by asking the following questions:

Some boys talk about having a “boner”. Is there a bone in the penis?

What is an erection?

How old are boys when they get their first erection?

What causes a boy to get an erection?

9. **Discuss** the following true anecdotes:

A boy would often get an erection when he was sitting watching an exciting hockey game.

A teenager would sometimes get an erection when he was concentrating on getting ready to run and do a high jump.

- Why do you think this happened?
- Were they thinking sexy thoughts?
- How do you think they felt when this happened?

10. Ask participants to define ejaculation:

- The release of semen from penis during an erection
- Millions of sperm in one ejaculation
- Usually has to be some extra stimulation of the penis for this to happen e.g. During sexual intercourse or masturbation – this is an orgasm
- May happen during sleep (wet dream)
- A boy knows he is producing sperm once he has started to have ejaculations

11. **Discuss** the possibility of reproduction once a boy can ejaculate. **Explain** the difference between ejaculation and urination using the following exercise:

- Tell participants to breathe in through their mouth.
- Where does the air go?
- Tell participants to swallow some saliva.
- Where does it go? Why doesn't their breath go into their stomach or their saliva go into their lungs? (Because valves open or close the right passageways – usually.)
- The same thing happens when a boy ejaculates or urinates.

12. **Discuss** wet dreams. Ask participants if they know what a “nocturnal emission” is.

- Ejaculation of semen during sleep
- One time that semen comes out without any extra touching of the penis
- Can be frightening and embarrassing
- Important to understand that it is a normal part of growing up
- Does not matter how many you have, some don't have them, some adults may have them

13. **Explain** circumcision.

- Important to mention the difference between one penis and another
- Usually it would be done soon after birth
- Removal of covering over end of penis
- Normal either way (no difference in sensation, performance, etc.)
- Something they will have to decide about if they are parents
- No health reason to have it done (not medically necessary, but a personal choice). Boys who have not been circumcised should cleanse beneath the foreskin of the penis regularly.

14. **Explain** jock itch.

- Sometimes sweaty underwear or jockstraps can lead to a scaly, itchy rash in the genital area
- It is important to keep yourself clean, and the skin dry (e.g. use of baby powder)
- It can be treated with anti-fungal preparations available at the drugstore without a prescription
- If the problem persists, see your doctor

(Adapted with permission from: Regional Niagara Public Health Department (1999) *Growth and Development Lesson Plans for Grades 5 & 6* and Toronto Public Health (1998) *Changes in You and Me!*)

