

Boys and Puberty

Adolescence is the time between childhood and adulthood. It lasts roughly from age 9 until adulthood. Adolescence includes puberty, physical changes, a change in thinking ability, and all the social and emotional changes that happen during this stage of life. Adolescence can be an exciting time and a tough time in a boy's life.

Puberty starts at the beginning of adolescence. It is when hormones change and a boy matures physically to become a young man. He experiences increases in height and weight, the size of his testicles and penis, and growth of pubic, facial and body hair. He gains muscle mass and physical strength. His voice deepens. His brain is also maturing while his body is changing. It is during puberty that a boy's reproductive organs mature so that his body is ready for reproduction. He is then able to get a girl pregnant.

There is a "master" gland in males that controls all of this development called the pituitary gland. It is located in the brain and is about the size of a pea, and produces hormones that cause the testicles to produce male sex hormones. These hormones cause many of the physical changes that turn a boy's body into a young man's body.

Boys go through many physical and emotional changes during puberty. During this time both boys and girls begin to feel more independent. So it's important to talk to your son a lot during this time to help him understand his changing body and maturing brain. It's a good time to talk about what you expect, about his goals, and how his choices affect his future. It is important for you to always be there for your son. He needs to feel comfortable talking with you. And your teen son is looking to you to model responsible behavior, something especially important during the teen years.

Physical Changes in Boys During Puberty

- Height and weight increase
- Body hair grows in the pubic area, under the arms, and on the face, and becomes thicker on the legs
- Muscles become stronger
- Vocal cords get thicker and longer — boys' voices deepen.
- The body develops an increased number of red blood cells
- Sweat and oil glands become more active, and body odor changes
- Acne can develop
- Some boys develop small and temporary breast tissue
- Reproductive system begins to work

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Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services