



## Understanding my body

### LESSON OVERVIEW



We know that puberty can be an overwhelming topic area – for both teachers and students. Our lesson plans and supporting resources aim to help teachers deliver key learning outcomes and content in a positive and comfortable way.

This lesson will help your students understand all about the growth and development that happens in our bodies throughout puberty – our way of growing up! Students will understand the what, why and when of puberty while reinforcing the idea that although these changes may seem strange, awkward and even embarrassing, they are all part of a natural process that everybody goes through.

Note: Teaching students about puberty can be a sensitive issue, the topics explored are connected to personal values, family backgrounds and spiritual beliefs. Teachers are encouraged to investigate the following

lesson content thoroughly prior to teaching. Depending on your school's policy, we recommend all students are given a letter communicating the content being explored with accompanying permission slip for their parents or guardians to sign prior to participation in this lesson.

### LEARNING INTENTION



Students will:

- Define and understand the word puberty
- Understand that individuals experience changes associated with puberty at different times, with differing levels of intensity and with different responses
- Identify the changes that occur to boys and girls throughout puberty and how they differ
- Learn strategies on how to manage the changes that occur
- Use a web-based resource to enhance understanding of changes associated with puberty

**RESOURCES**



- Interactive whiteboard
- Libra Girl website – [www.lovelibra.com/libra-girl](http://www.lovelibra.com/libra-girl)
- Parent or guardian permission slips
- Understanding My Body (interactive online activity)

Note: If your school does not have the capability to access and use the interactive resource, a student workbook is available to download and print as a substitute (or as a home activity) on the Libra Girl website – [www.lovelibra.com/libra-girl](http://www.lovelibra.com/libra-girl)

**ASSESSMENT**

There are a number of assessment opportunities throughout this lesson including:

- Class discussion
- Student questioning
- Interactive activities
- Final quiz

**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM LINKS**

Key Learning Area:

Health and Physical Education

Investigate resources and strategies to manage changes and transitions associated with puberty (ACPPS052)

**PRIOR TO THE LESSON**



**SEEK PERMISSION**

- Ensure the lesson content and activities fall within your school’s policy. We suggest you discuss this with the relevant coordinator or head of department.
- Collect signed permission slips from each student’s parent or guardian prior to teaching this lesson.

**CREATE A CONFIDENTIAL QUESTION BOX**

It’s common for students to be embarrassed to ask questions around puberty, we encourage the use of a question box throughout the program. Place the question box in an accessible place in your classroom so that students can submit questions that they may not feel comfortable asking in front of their peers. Use your judgement, determine if the answer can be provided by yourself or is more appropriate to be answered by a parent or guardian.

**SET THE TONE**

Before commencing any lessons, ensure students understand that this is a sensitive topic. Take time to establish rules and expectations that make your classroom a safe and respectful environment. You know your students best, we encourage classes to create rules around:

- Everyone’s rights to beliefs and opinions
- A respectful and safe environment
- Personal questions – what is appropriate to share in a group setting versus what should be raised in a confidential environment with a trusted adult.

**LESSON INTRODUCTION****15 MINS**

1. Explain to students that it is normal for some people to feel embarrassed when it comes to the subject of puberty. To reduce the level of student anxiety, explain that the content students will learn about happens to everybody and it is completely natural. Reinforce your established rules of respect and explain that if anyone has any questions they don't feel comfortable asking in front of the class, they can submit it into the question box.
2. Show students the **Understanding my body** interactive resource using your interactive whiteboard. Explain to students that you will be using this resource throughout the lesson to complete activities and explore content. Tell students that they are welcome to access it at home and are encouraged to do so with their parents or guardians, so they have someone trusted to talk to if they have any questions.

**PUBERTY – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

3. Access the first slide Puberty – **What does it mean?** Invite students to brainstorm what they already know about puberty and what they would like to find out, record key words and ideas.

*(Assessment opportunity to measure prior knowledge).*

**LET US EXPLAIN...**

4. Using the **Let us explain...** slide, provide students with a basic definition of puberty. Click and reveal facts and discuss each as a class. Give students an opportunity to ask questions. Discuss the point that the average duration of puberty is about 3 years, however everyone is different and has differing experiences.

**MAIN BODY OF TEACHING****30 MINS****WHAT'S WITH THE CHANGES?**

1. Using the slide **What's with the changes?** Explain to students that puberty is a natural process that happens to everyone. During puberty two parts of the brain begin to make more hormones in your body. They are called the hypothalamus (hy-po-thal-a-mus) and the pituitary (pit-u-it-ary) glands. The hormones then communicate with different parts of the body and as a result, changes begin to occur.
  - Oestrogen is responsible for the development of the girl changes (wider hips, breasts, pubic and armpit hair). Oestrogen also regulates the menstrual cycle.
  - Testosterone is responsible for the development of boy changes (deepening of voice, growth of penis and testes size, facial and body hair).

Explain that both females and males have oestrogen and testosterone in their bodies. As a general rule, females have an increased amount of oestrogen whereas males have an increased amount of testosterone.

**WHAT CAN I EXPECT?**

- Using the slide **What can I expect?**  
Discuss the changes that occur during puberty. Talk about how girls and boys experience some common changes and some different changes. As a whole class, sort the changes into the girls column, the boys column or the both column. Give students an opportunity to discuss each and ask any questions. Reinforce that although these changes may seem strange, it is just the body's way of growing and developing.

**MANAGING CHANGES**

- Although we experience some changes that can make us feel embarrassed or awkward, there are strategies that we can use in order to maintain a healthy body as well as build confidence. Using the slide **Managing changes** brainstorm and reveal the strategies that students can incorporate into their routines. Discuss the importance of each strategy and provide students with the opportunity to ask any questions.

**UNDERSTANDING 'GIRL PARTS' - EXTERNAL**

- Explain that 'girl parts' are made up of body parts found in the female reproductive system. These 'parts' enable females to reproduce (have babies). Display the external diagram of the female reproductive system using the slide **Understanding 'girl parts'**. As a class investigate each identified part and explore the correct terminology. Read and discuss each definition.

**Vulva:** Covers the entrance of the vagina and has the following parts; mons pubis, labia, clitoris, urinary opening and vaginal opening.

**Mons pubis:** The tissue and skin found above your legs, this area becomes covered in pubic hair which starts to grow during puberty.

**Urethral opening:** Where urine is excreted from the body.

**Vaginal opening:** The entry to the vagina.

**Labia:** Two sets of skin folds on either side of the vaginal opening, the labia majora are the outer lips, and the labia minora are the inner lips.

**Clitoris:** A small sensitive bump full of nerve endings at the bottom of the mons pubis that is covered by the labia minora.

**UNDERSTANDING 'GIRL PARTS' - INTERNAL**

- Show students the next slide which displays a diagram of the internal female reproductive system. As a class investigate each identified part and explore the correct terminology. Read and discuss each definition.

**Hymen:** A thin fringe of tissue surrounding or partially covering the opening of the vagina. This can be ruptured due to vigorous exercise, use of tampons or during sex. Some girls are born without a hymen.

**Vagina:** A muscular passageway that is able to expand during childbirth. This is also where the period comes from.

**Birth canal:** the channel formed by the cervix, vagina and vulva through which the baby passes during childbirth.

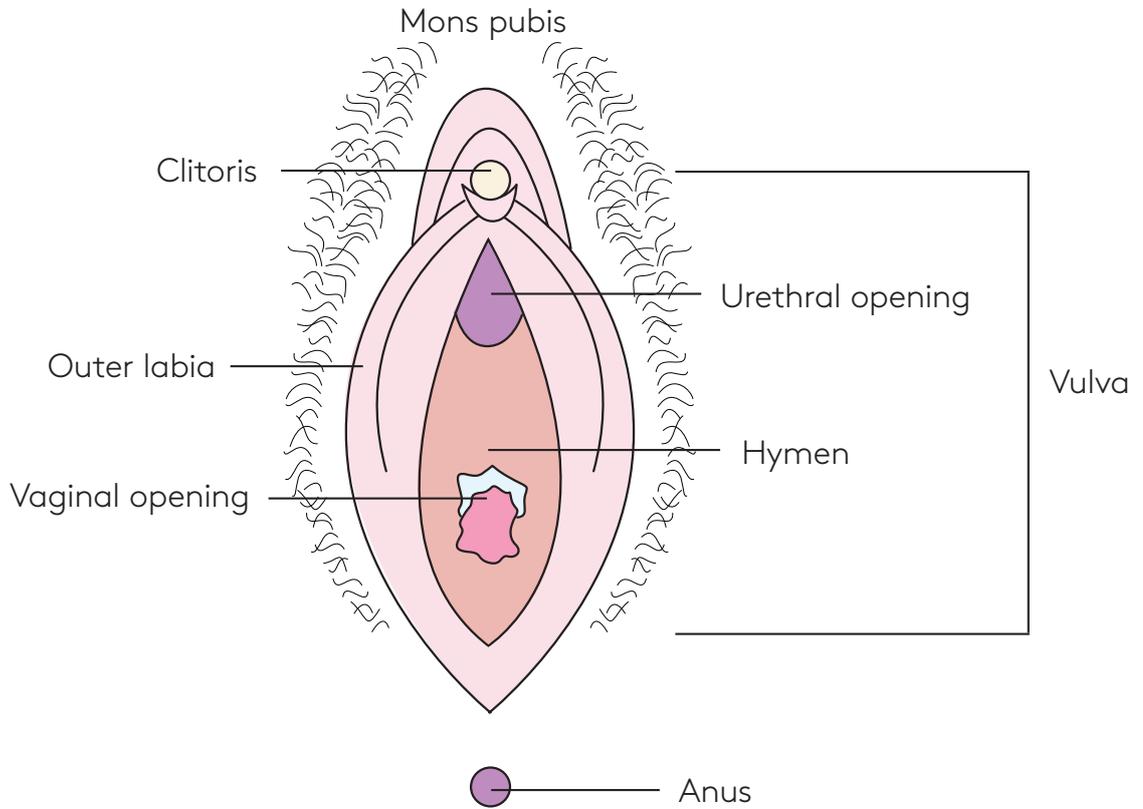
**Cervix:** A narrow entryway between the vagina and the uterus. It dilates during childbirth to allow the child to move from the uterus into the birth canal.

**Ovary:** There are two ovaries. During puberty they start making more oestrogen and other hormones causing parts of the body to change.

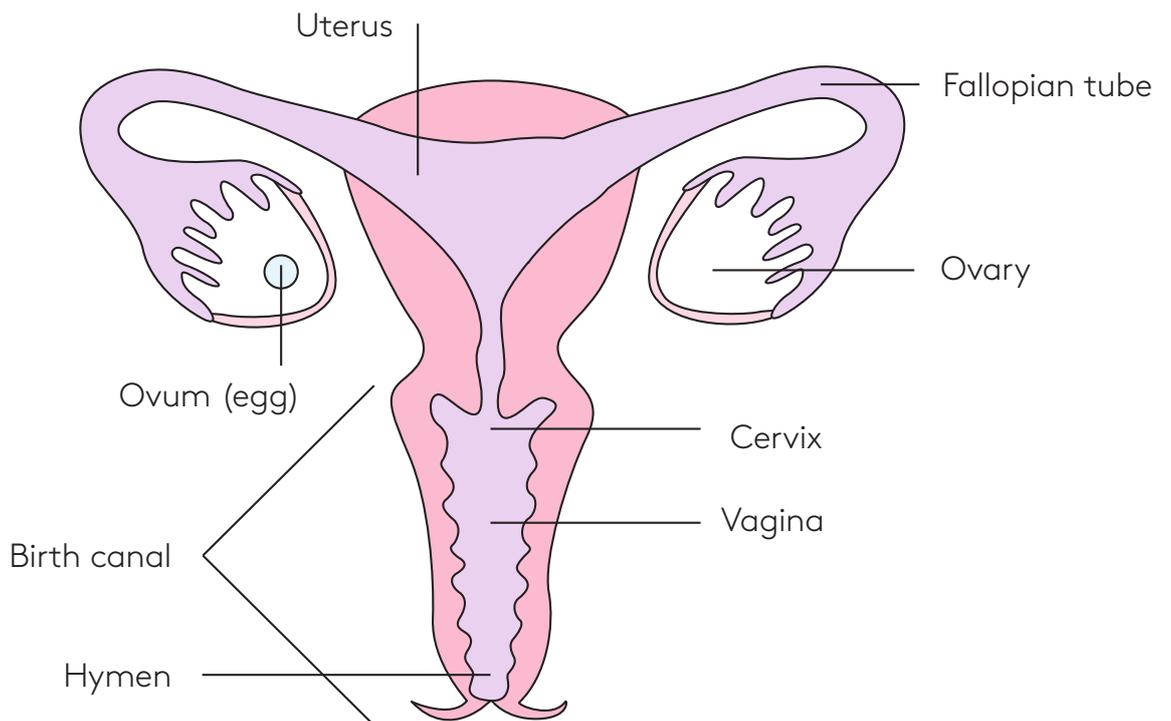
**Ovum (egg):** Once a month during the process of ovulation, the ovaries release one egg (ovum).

**Uterus:** Where the foetus grows during pregnancy, also known as the womb.

UNDERSTANDING 'GIRL PARTS' - EXTERNAL



UNDERSTANDING 'GIRL PARTS' - INTERNAL



**Fallopian tube:** Two thin tubes that lead from the ovaries to the uterus, the released egg moves along the fallopian tube. This is where an egg can be fertilised by sperm, also called conception.

#### UNDERSTANDING 'BOY PARTS' - EXTERNAL

6. Inform students that the male reproductive system is made up of 'parts' of the body that enable males to reproduce (make babies). Show students the diagram of the external male reproductive system using the slide **Understanding 'boy parts'**. As a class investigate each identified part and explore the correct terminology. Read and discuss each definition.

**Scrotum:** Contains the testicles and the epididymis.

**Penis:** The male sex organ. The penis delivers sperm through the urethra in a process called ejaculation.

**Testicle:** The two testicles (testes) produce sperm and testosterone.

#### UNDERSTANDING 'BOY PARTS' - INTERNAL

7. Show students the next slide which displays a diagram of the internal male reproductive system. As a class investigate each identified part and explore the correct terminology. Read and discuss each definition.

**Epididymis:** Where sperm is stored.

**Seminal vesicle:** Produces seminal fluid called semen.

**Bladder:** Stores urine until it is released through the urethra.

**Prostate gland:** Assists in the production of seminal fluid.

**Vas deferens:** Narrow tubes leading from the testicles through the seminal vesicle and prostate gland to the penis. They provide a passageway for the sperm to travel.

**Urethra:** A narrow tube at the centre of the penis which allows both urine and semen to escape the body. When semen escapes, this is called ejaculation.

8. Provide students an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

#### PLENARY

##### 5 MINS



#### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Instruct students to participate in the quiz found at the end of the interactive resource. You can deliver the quiz as a whole class activity or an individual activity – it's up to you!

*(Assessment opportunity to measure student knowledge and understanding).*

**Q1** Boys begin puberty before girls.

**False** Generally girls start to go through puberty before boys, however everyone is different.

**Q2** During puberty hormones are secreted from the pituitary gland.

**True** During puberty the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland start making more hormones in your body.

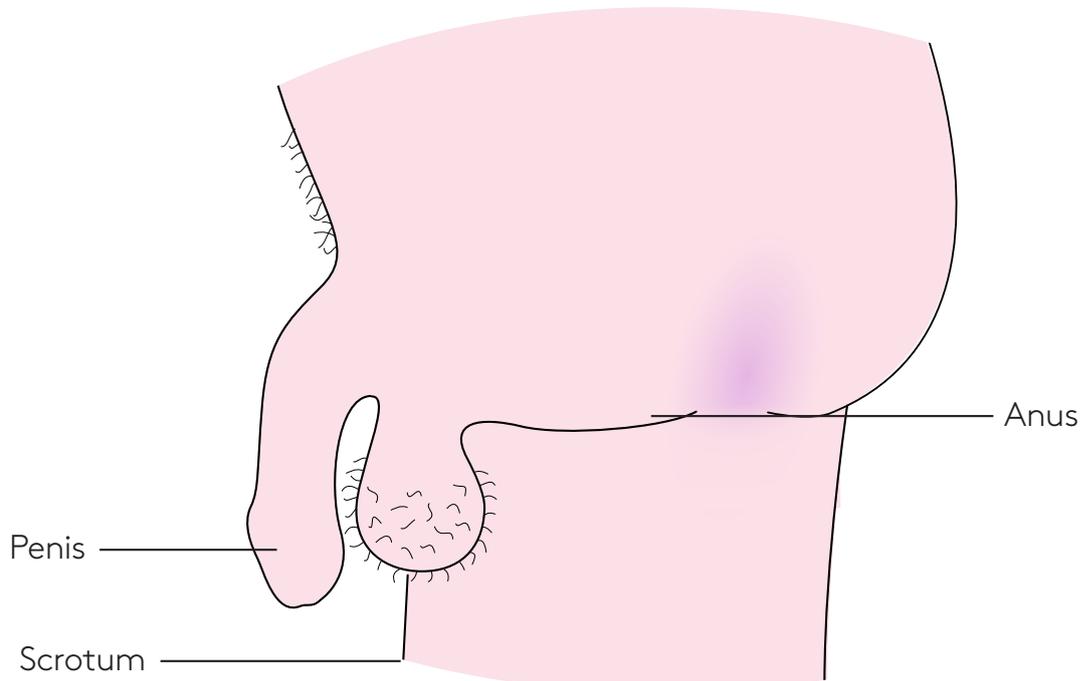
**Q3** During puberty males experience an increase in oestrogen.

**True** Oestrogen is essential for the maturation of bones in males. Although the increase is only slight, it is necessary for puberty.

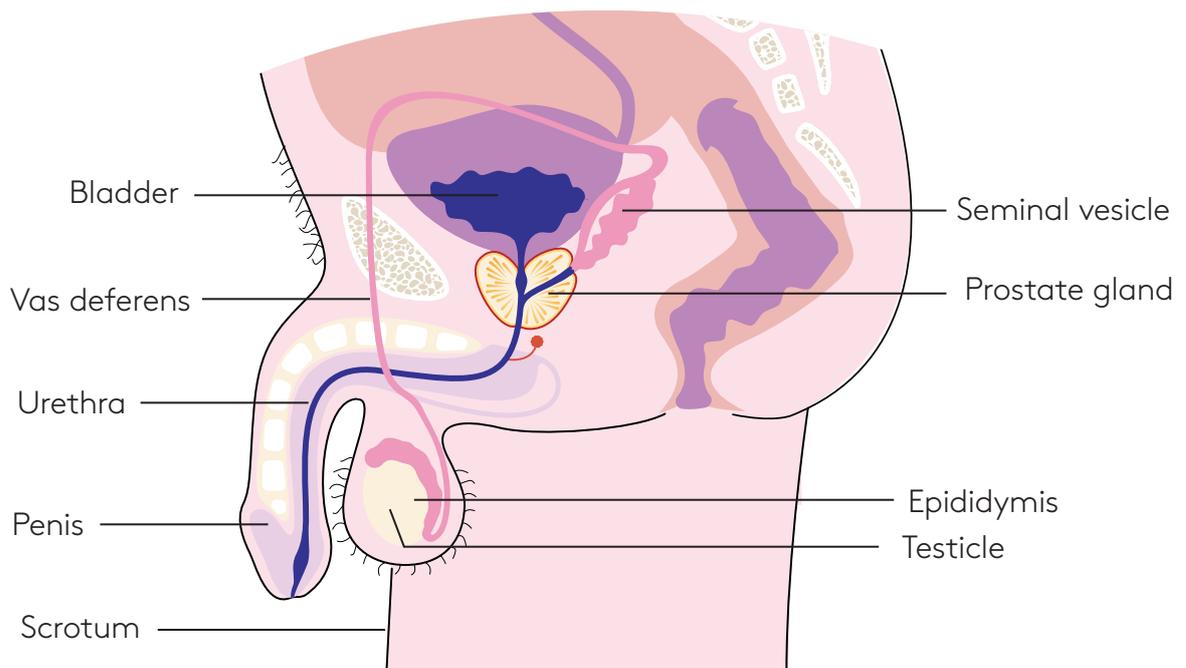
**Q4** Acne is a result of poor hygiene.

**False** Pimples are caused by oil-producing glands and sweat glands. Don't worry, you can help manage this by washing your face, eating a healthy diet and drinking lots of water.

UNDERSTANDING 'BOY PARTS' - EXTERNAL



UNDERSTANDING 'BOY PARTS' - INTERNAL



**Q5** Deodorant will prevent body odour (BO).

**False** Deodorant only covers up the odour – it’s still there! You can use antiperspirant deodorant to prevent body odour.

**Q6** Puberty is an embarrassing topic that you should avoid talking about.

**False** Puberty is a perfectly natural process that everyone goes through, it’s important to find a trusted adult to talk to if you have any questions.

**Q7** During puberty girls and boys will experience physical and emotional changes.

**True** Puberty can be overwhelming at times for both boys and girls, your body is growing and developing into adulthood. This means that you will experience physical changes to your body as well as changes in the way you think and feel.

**Q8** Your body is starting to change before all of your friends, this isn’t normal.

**False** Everyone is different and experiences puberty at different rates, if you are worried or unsure talk to a trusted adult or your doctor.

2. Discuss the answers to the quiz and clarify any misunderstandings and answer any questions. Remind students that the confidential question box is available for students to post any questions they may still have that they don’t feel comfortable asking in front of others. Encourage students to access the interactive at home using the Libra Girls website so that they can discuss the content with their parents or guardians.
3. Ensure you revisit the question box regularly and answer any questions that may have been posted by the students.

**REFERENCES**

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