

Period Pain Symptoms

Familiarise yourself with puberty and find comfort in knowing that what you're experiencing is actually normal.

This checklist is designed to help you to assess your own condition. Please tick the boxes that are relevant to you and remember that all conditions are normal. Physical changes may be some of the telling signs that you are starting puberty.

Curves

- Have your breasts changed?
- Are your nipples larger or darker (some people might notice tiny bumps forming on their nipples)?
- Are your breasts growing under your nipples first?

If so, this is normal. These are referred to as "breast buds." Your breasts will fully develop in 1 to 4 years.

- Are your breasts sore, tender, and sensitive?

This again is very normal and wearing a bra may give your breasts support and comfort, protecting them slightly from the sensitivity.

- Is one breast larger than the other?

If the answer is yes, don't worry - it is common that they may grow unevenly. By the end of puberty, your breasts should be about the same size.

- Have you gained weight?

Puberty is a time where girls are supposed to gain weight. Your body creates more body fat so that you can have fuller breasts, hips, stomach, and thighs. As your hip bones grow wider, your waist will look smaller. Gaining some weight during puberty is important for normal growth.

Face and Skin Changes

- Have you developed oily skin?
- Have you noticed acne?

Blackheads, whiteheads, or red bumps of acne affect nearly every teenager and many young adults. Acne happens when a "plug" of oils and skin gets stuck in a follicle which is a pore from which a hair grows. The area around the follicle swells and reddens. Keep your skin clean so that oil and dirt cannot build up.

Hair Growth

- Have you noticed hair growth on your pubic area and armpits?

Hair growth is one of the first signs of puberty. If it's scattered and light, this is normal. You'll notice it becoming wiry, darker, thicker, and curly as your puberty continues.

Menstruation (men-STRAY-shun)

Menstruation means having your "period".

- Are your periods coming once each month and lasting between 2 to 7 days?
- Are you noticing peculiar body smells?

When blood comes into contact with air it changes and may produce a foul odour. It is advisable to bath more frequently during menstruation to reduce the risk of foul odours.

- Are you suffering from headaches, fatigue and dizziness? Are you more emotional and tearful?

This is normal. It means you're experiencing premenstrual syndrome (otherwise known as PMS).

- Do you feel as though you're bloated?

During your period your body retains water (body fluid) before and after your period. This is normal.

- Are you suffering from cramps?

Some people may experience painful, sometimes very painful stomach cramps before and during period time. Naprogesic can help decrease the pain.

Emotional Feelings

It is absolutely normal to tick each of the below conditions during puberty.

- Are you feeling confused, awkward and sad?
- Do you find yourself laughing one moment and then crying the next?

With so many hormones racing through your body, this can be very normal. However, if you are very sad all the time for more than seven days, talk to someone. There will always be an adult willing to listen and able to help you out.

■ Are you constantly tired and hungry? Do you feel like you cannot eat or sleep enough?

You may need 9 or more hours of sleep each night and good food for healthy growth. Remember puberty is a time of very fast growth.

■ Are you uncomfortable and embarrassed with your body?

This feeling might be heightened with friends developing at a differing pace to you. Try not to compare your body to your friends'. Your lanky, awkward feelings will pass – they're not here to stay.

■ Want to be away from your family?

We understand that during puberty, you may want to spend most of your time with friends as you're feeling embarrassed in front of your parents or siblings, but remember your extended family may be a better support than your friends for various issues.