

Preparing for changes at puberty (formerly Period positive/preparing for periods)

Year: Y4

Subjects and Issues

◆Body parts ◆Growing and changing ◆Personal hygiene ◆Puberty ◆Science ◆Relationships education ◆Periods ◆Menstruation ◆Body changes ◆Wet dreams ◆National Curriculum science - relationships elements

NB: the **Science National Curriculum** statement associated with this lesson is from the Y5 Programme of Study. However, it is not uncommon for menstruation to begin before that age. Girls can start their periods as young as 8 years old, so it is strongly recommended that children learn about periods from Y3/P4.

This lesson builds on the content of the Y3/P4 lesson *My changing body*. It reviews some of its content and extends the learning. If the children haven't done that lesson then it's recommended that you teach it first, as a lead into this one.

In response to feedback from teachers, we have also added new content related to puberty changes, including wet dreams.

Introduction

Ask the children who can remember from the previous puberty lesson (All Change) what happens to a boy's body when he starts puberty? [increased body hair, get bigger and taller, voice deepens, may get spots, greasy hair, testicles start to make and store sperm, may have wet dreams] and who can remember what happens to a girl's body when she starts puberty? [increased body hair, get bigger and taller including widening of hips and breast development, voice can deepen slightly, may get spots, greasy hair, eggs get released/periods/menstruation]

Explain that we are going to learn more about wet dreams and periods, and how they can be managed.

Activity 1 - What happens with periods?

Show the clip of menstruation from the Kidshealth website to help remind the class of what they talked about in the *My changing body* lesson in Year 3/P4. **View this film here.**

(<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/menstruation.html>)

Allow time for any questions after. You may find it useful to refer to the IWB slide showing the female internal reproductive organs, here. (NB - the IWB resource contains a second slide showing the male internal reproductive organs. Although this is not needed for this lesson it can be used if questions about boys' internal reproductive organs arise). The puberty glossary may also be useful to have to hand for this section.

Using the images of period products on the IWB or with examples of real products to show the children, ask whether anyone can remember what a girl or woman could use to protect her clothes when she is having a period? (period/menstruation pads, tampons, or maybe even menstruation cups. You can use the Puberty glossary to explain pads and tampons.

Menstruation cups are plastic devices that a woman can place inside her vagina to collect period

blood. See [Mooncup.co.uk](https://www.mooncup.co.uk) for more information. It needs to be emptied regularly, just the same as changing a pad or tampon on a regular basis; this is also for safety reasons associated with toxic shock syndrome). You may find it useful to know that the DfE is running a **Period Product scheme** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england>) where you can order a range of period products and have them delivered for free.

Explain here the need for extra care to be taken by girls at this time of the month - regular changing of pads (or other items used to protect clothing) and to change underwear regularly.

Explain, too, that the hormones (chemicals) which cause the changes at puberty also make a person's sweat glands more active. This means that the person needs to wash more regularly.

Activity 2 – Period quiz: true or false?

With the children working in pairs, distribute the *Period Quiz: true or false?* Activity sheet and ask the pupils to complete this. Go through the quiz, answering any questions that arise, or offer children the opportunity to post any questions in a Questions box or 'Ask it basket'. Explain that these questions can be answered at a later date. (See teacher guidance film clip in Resources needed area for guidance on using a question box).

Activity 3 – Managing wet dreams

Explain that in the same way people manage the blood from a period being released from their body by using products to stop their clothes from being stained, people who have wet dreams may need to think about how they keep their nightclothes, e.g. pyjamas, and bedding clean. This is by changing their nightclothes and bedsheets in the morning and putting them in the wash. You might like to show this video to your class:

What is a wet dream? (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uotzoDDRW_s)

Please note: this video also refers to girls having wet dreams. You may find this article about girls and wet dreams (<https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/do-women-have-wet-dreams-too>) useful for further reading.

After showing the video it would be important to check their learning, take any questions, and reinforce the importance of personal hygiene once puberty has started.

Plenary

Summarise the lesson, explaining that periods are a normal part of growing up and show that it's the body's way of working as it should.

Periods are nothing to be ashamed about and most of us wouldn't be here if it wasn't for eggs and periods! (Recognising that some children may be IVF babies.)

Extension (optional)

Children could go home and talk to their parents about what they remember about when they first started puberty, and how they felt.

Children will be able to:

- Know the key facts of the menstrual cycle;
- Understand that periods are a normal part of puberty for girls;
- Identify some of the ways to cope better with periods.