

# Always Changing & Growing Up

How to best support your  
daughter during puberty

*always*

## Dear Parent,

You and your daughter are approaching a huge milestone and the difference you can make at this point in her life is huge, too! You can support her journey into adolescence by talking about it openly and being prepared with the facts.

This guide gives you lots of practical tips, from how to answer her questions and help her choose the right products for her period, to how to stay healthy and confident - and so much more!

If you're receiving this guide because your daughter has just gone through a Puberty Education session at her school, you have a unique opportunity to continue the conversation and go over the booklet she would have received. If she hasn't had that session yet - don't worry - this guide will give you plenty of tips on how and when to start the conversation with her.

In either case - by starting the conversation today - you'll be helping to kick off her journey towards becoming a strong, healthy, and confident young woman.

Yours,

*The Always Team*

## Girls need their Dad, too!

Being a dad or male caregiver to a girl going through puberty can be especially daunting. But whatever your family situation might be, by showing her that you are comfortable talking about periods and are there to help, you will do wonders for helping her stay confident during what can be a challenging time in her life.

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# Puberty & Periods

## Counting down to the big day

A girl's first period usually happens when she is between 9 and 15 years old, with most girls starting around 11-13. However, every girl's body is different and has its own schedule. You can expect to see her first period about two years after the first signs of puberty. If she hasn't started it by the age of 16, consider seeing a doctor.

Whenever it happens, a girl's first period should be a positive milestone, not something that is upsetting. You can help her stay confident by giving her the information she needs.

Start by reminding yourself about what is going to happen to her and why. This will help you feel ready and knowledgeable to begin the conversation with her.

## A quick refresher of the changes you'll see during puberty:

### Physical Changes:

- She will develop breasts and vaginal discharge
- She will start to have body odour
- She will grow underarm, leg and pubic hair
- She may develop oilier skin and hair
- She will start her period about 2-3 years after puberty starts

### Emotional Changes:

- She may express her feelings more easily (good and bad)
- She may get angry more easily and go through mood swings
- She may become more self-conscious
- She may start to compare herself to other girls

For more information, simply refer to your daughter's booklet or check out [always.com](https://www.always.com) and [tampax.com](https://www.tampax.com)

# Tips to having the period talk

## How to start the period talk

- Do your best to **create an open-door policy** when it comes to talking together about her body and her feelings. Don't turn her away if she comes to talk to you. If you really don't have time, make sure you tell her that you're happy and grateful she came to you, and find an alternative time when you can have a conversation together.
- **Look for natural moments** to bring up the discussion about puberty and periods. It might be when you're out shopping for period products, or in the bathroom together, or in reaction to an advertisement, TV show or news story.
- Try to **understand what she already knows** about puberty & periods – and adapt accordingly. That way you can make sure you don't assume that she knows more than she does, nor that you come across as patronizing if she's got some understanding already.
- **Start with the puberty & period basics** from an early age – helping her understand what puberty is, and that she will one day get a period. As she gets older, you can go in to more details about what her period will be like, what emotional changes she might experience, and how to cope with these changes.
- **Don't just make it a one-off discussion**, or hand her a book! By encouraging open and frequent dialogue with her, you will help her know that she can easily come to you when she wants to talk about things, or has questions.



## What to remember when talking about periods

- **Use accurate words** – not euphemisms! By referring to her period using euphemisms like her “time of the month”, or “aunt flow”, or “shark week” – you’re teaching her that her period is something that should be hidden, and something that she should be ashamed of. You might also want to use words like “period products” instead of “sanitary products”, as using the latter can imply that there is something unsanitary, or unhygienic about periods, which of course there isn’t!
- **Be honest.** Going through puberty & getting your period can be challenging – so don’t feel like you need to sugarcoat everything.
- **Reassure her.** While starting to bleed can be scary for a young girl – help reassure her that it’s normal and it shouldn’t stop her from doing what she likes. For example, if she wants to go swimming, reassure that she still can if she uses tampons.
- **Share your own experience.** Your daughter might be slow or embarrassed about opening up to you, and might not know what questions to ask. By sharing your own experience, you help show her that you have been through this, or know someone who has.
- But, don’t necessarily assume that she’ll go through the same journey that you, or your friends went through, **everyone is different!**
- It’s ok to say **“I don’t know”**. Period products and our understanding of puberty and periods change over time. Just make sure that you do go and look for the information she needs, and go back to her with it.



## Your daughter's FAQs

We've listened to teens and pulled together all her top questions to help you feel prepared.

### **Am I normal?**

Yes, she is! You can reassure her and tell her puberty is natural and happens to all of us – so she shouldn't be worried about all the changes she's going through.

### **Why do I get periods?**

Remind your daughter that periods are a healthy sign of her body growing and being able to carry a baby (if that's what she chooses to do one day). A period happens because of changing hormones in the body. Hormones are chemical messengers. The ovaries release hormones causing the lining of the uterus (endometrium) to build up. The built-up lining is ready for a fertilized egg to implant and start developing. If there is no fertilized egg, the lining breaks down and leaves the vagina as a period. This cycle takes about a month – which is why most girls and women get their periods once a month.

### **What is vaginal discharge and how to deal with it?**

You can tell her that vaginal discharge is a natural fluid produced by her body that helps prevent the vagina from drying out and protects it from infections. She can use pantyliners to absorb it and help her stay feeling fresh and clean all day.

### **What do I do if I get my period at school?**

You can help her prepare for it. Give her some period products that she can put in her schoolbag, purse or leave in her locker – and reassure her – if she does get caught off guard, she can talk with the school nurse to see if they have period products available, or she can make a makeshift pad out of toilet paper until she's able to get a proper pad.



## **What if I get stains?**

Reassure her that period accidents happen to all women and it's not a big deal. Then, help her get prepared. You can advise her to always carry a period product with her, teach her how to track her period so she knows when to expect it, and encourage her to wear a pantyliner – at least in the days running up to her period. If she does get a stain at school, and feels subconscious, a great tip is to tie her jumper around her waist, until she can change her clothes.

## **How long will my period last?**

You can remind her that it differs from one girl to another. For most girls and women, it usually lasts between 3 to 7 days.

## **What if my period is irregular?**

Reassure your daughter that when she first starts menstruating – irregular is totally regular! Whilst the average menstrual cycle is 28 days, it can take up to 2 years for her period to become regular. So having a period that comes every 21 to 45 days is totally normal too. As she gets older the normal length will be around 21 to 35 days.

## **How much blood will I shed?**

The average female loses about 4 to 12 teaspoons of menstrual fluid during her period. But only a small amount of that is blood. Since your daughter's body contains more than 4 litres of blood, it doesn't miss the little bit lost during a period.

## **Does it all come out at once?**

No! Tell her that her period will leave her body over a 3 to 7 day period, so only a little bit comes out at a time! She might find that her flow is slightly heavier at the beginning of her period – but reassure her it's not going to all gush out at once!

## **What is spotting?**

Spotting is light vaginal bleeding that happens between periods. If it happens around the usual period (before or after), it can be normal. If it's happening often or unpredictably, you can consider checking with a doctor.

## What blood colour is normal?

Red, brown, pink...period blood colour varies a lot from one girl to another and from one day of her period to another - so there is no normal colour.

## I feel moody, what can I do?

You can help her deal with Pre-Menstrual Syndrome by:

- Encouraging moderate exercise and stretching
- Reducing processed foods and ensuring she has a healthy diet
- Ensuring she gets adequate sleep
- Helping her learn deep breathing and relaxation techniques
- Helping her identify emotions and manage them in healthy ways, like talking or journaling

## Can I use tampons?

Tampons can be used safely by any girl on her period. They're particularly useful for girls who like to hit the water during their period. If you need to, you can reassure your daughter that using a tampon will not hurt, nor will it mean she will lose her virginity. If she wants to try a tampon, most girls find starting with an applicator tampon best - as they can often be easier to insert.



*Over half of girls lose confidence at puberty,  
but together we can change that!*

## What protection should she use?

It's very normal for your daughter to be anxious about her first period. Helping her get familiar with the different types of period products available, how they work and how to use them will help her feel much more at ease and prepared to take it on!

There are many forms of period protection and new product innovations come out fairly regularly. One thing to remember is that what you use may or may not be the right protection for your daughter. It's important to allow her to experiment and find the product that best suits her needs.

### Here is a quick overview of the most used forms of period protection:

**Pads:** They are worn on the inside of her underwear and are the form of protection that most girls use when they first get their periods - as they are so easy to use. Some come with wings to help hold the pad securely in place inside the underwear.



**Tampons:** They are an internal form of protection that many girls choose to first use when they want to go swimming, for example. Most tampon beginners find that using an applicator tampon, like Tampax, best - as the applicator can make it easier and more comfortable to insert.



## Pads FAQs

### Why use ultra pads instead of thick pads?

Unlike thick pads, ultra pads like Always Ultra, contain super absorbent material. This material is a “liquid locking gel” that turns menstrual fluid into gel – and gel can’t leak. Ultra pads are also much thinner, so your daughter will hardly feel them and they won’t be visible when she wears them.

### What size is right for her?

Many girls and women experience leaks during their periods because they are wearing the wrong size pad. At Always, we have developed a wide range of sizes so that she can find one that fits her best. **The better a pad fits, the better it protects.**

To help your teen find the right size, use the Always My Fit chart on the top of every Always pack. It shows what size is right for her based on her flow and underwear size.

Find Your Fit	 S	 M	 L
Light Flow	 1	 1	 2
Moderate Flow	 1	 2	 3
Heavy Flow	 2	 3	 3
For extra Always night protection	 4	 4	 4

## Should she use day and night pads?

Yes! It's a great idea to let her try day and night pads - so she can start experimenting with different forms of protection at different times. Always Ultra Secure Night pads have a wider back, so she's less likely to experience leaks no matter how much she tosses and turns throughout the night.



## How do I know Always pads are safe?

The safety of the girls and women who use our pads is the foundation of everything we do. The components we use have been extensively reviewed by physicians, scientists and health authorities around the world and determined to be safe. You can learn more about the rigorous testing of our pads and see our pad components on the Always website.



# Tampons FAQs

## What is the best tampon to start with?

Tampax Pearl Compak is a good option to start with because it is easy to use and offers great protection! To make insertion easy, it has a smooth applicator with a rounded tip and it's compak so it's easy to carry around at school.



## How to choose the right absorbency?

For comfort with her first tampon insertion, she may want to try with a smaller, lower absorbency tampon like Tampax Pearl Compak regular.



**REGULAR**

If the tampon is difficult to remove after 4-8 hours and it still has some white parts remaining, she should



**SUPER**

switch to a lower absorbency. If she finds she has to change it more



**SUPER PLUS**

frequently, she'll want to try a higher absorbency.

She will most likely need different absorbencies for different days of her period.

## How to use a tampon?

If you've never used a tampon and wonder how it works, you'll find detailed guidance in each Tampax pack. You can also refer to your daughter's booklet or go to [tampax.com](http://tampax.com).

## How to dispose of tampons?

Too many people still believe tampons can be flushed in the toilet. But they can't! Flushing tampons down the toilet can cause the toilet, or other parts of the system, to clog up. You can help by teaching your daughter not to flush tampons. She can simply wrap used tampons in toilet paper and put them in the bin instead.



## Are tampons safe?

Tampax tampons are designed to make periods easier to manage and have been trusted by millions of women since 1936. We use safe, reliable materials and extensively test our products to meet the strict tampon safety requirements of all the relevant health authorities around the world. More details of all our product components used can be found at [tampax.com](https://tampax.com).

## TSS

### What is TSS?

Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) is a rare but serious illness that can develop rapidly in anyone. With early diagnosis TSS can be successfully treated.

### What are the warning signs of TSS?

Sudden high fever / Vomiting / Diarrhea / Sunburn-like rash / Dizziness / Muscle aches / Fainting / Near fainting.

If your daughter has one or more of these warning signs, she should remove her tampon and contact a doctor.

### Although TSS is rare, it is recommended that your daughter:

- Alternates tampon use with pads.
- Uses a tampon with the minimum absorbency needed for her menstrual flow.
- Consults a doctor before she uses tampons again if she has had TSS warning signs in the past.
- Washes her hands before and after inserting a tampon.

**Remember:** your daughter should never wear a tampon for more than 8 hours. If she sleeps longer than that, she should wear a pad.

To help her remember when to change it, you can encourage her to set an alarm, or simply write down when she inserted it.



# Discharge & Pantyliners

## Discharge

During puberty your daughter will probably start to notice that her underwear sometimes gets stained with discharge - a creamy whitish fluid. This is perfectly normal & healthy, it helps prevent the vagina from drying out and protects it from infections.

The amount of vaginal discharge can vary during the menstrual cycle as hormone levels in the body change. But If your daughter's discharge is significantly different than usual, has a bad smell or if she experiences itching in her intimate area you should go see a doctor.

## Pantyliners

Whilst vaginal discharge is normal and healthy, it might make your daughter feel less fresh or uncomfortable. That's where a pantyliner can help! It's an absorbent liner that she simply sticks in the inside of her knickers. Unlike pads (which are designed to be used only during your period) pantyliners are designed to be worn every day.

## Always Dailies Fresh & Protect are perfect for:

- Keeping underwear clean
- Absorbing vaginal discharge
- Absorbing perspiration
- Extra protection when she's getting used to tampons
- Protection for light period days or spotting

**She'll stay fresh and have this step-out-of-the-shower feeling for up to 12 hours!**





# Parents' Period FAQs

## Should I celebrate her first period?

Even though your daughter may not want to draw attention to her period, it is nice to do something special to acknowledge this milestone. Ask your daughter how she would like to celebrate it before you plan a period party or period-friendly menu! She might prefer something more subtle like a special dinner out, her favorite treat with a friend, or a book or journal.

## How to create a first period kit?

You know her tastes the best, so let your creativity sparkle! You can start by adding into a purse of your choice: her puberty guide, a few period products in different sizes and absorbencies, spare underwear, hand sanitizer, wipes, chocolate and maybe something sentimental, like a note of encouragement and support from you! Encourage her to carry the kit in her bag so she's always prepared.

## Does she need to start seeing a gynecologist?

Yes! As your daughter gets older, and starts getting her period, she should start seeing an obstetrician-gynecologist for regular check-ups. They may perform a general health check and external and internal genital exams.

## Should I tell the men in the family about her period?

Yes, it's a good idea to ensure the men in your family understand what girls, like your daughter, are going through during puberty. This can help them realize that these changes are completely normal, and can encourage them not to tease or bully anyone because of their period. To your son, you can explain how, as girls grow up, they will start bleeding from their vagina once a month. It's not because they're hurt, it's just a healthy and normal process their body goes through each month when the uterus sheds its lining if they are not pregnant.

## Caring for the environment

At Always and Tampax, we are committed to **environmental sustainability** and we believe we have a role to play in reducing waste.

Our production sites are **zero manufacturing waste to landfill**, which means instead of sending waste to landfill we recycle, re-use or re-purpose it. When designing our products, we carefully choose our materials and manufacturing practices to minimize our environmental impact and **reduce waste**.

Around the world, we're also launching new projects to help **recycle** the period products we create. We also educate the people that use our products on the need to dispose of them in a bin, instead of flushing them in the toilet.

*Together, we can make a difference!*



# Helping her stay confident and healthy

As your daughter goes through puberty – it isn't just her body that changes – she may also develop new emotions and become more aware of what those around her do and think. By arming your daughter with the information she needs, and paying close attention to what you do, you can help make sure those changes don't cause her to lose confidence. Together, you can show the world that doing things #LikeAGirl means amazing things!

## Confidence building tips

### Encourage her to embrace the growth mindset

The growth mindset is the belief that you can grow your ability with effort. To explain it to your daughter you can tell her that the brain is like a muscle – it gets stronger with exercise, practice and challenges.

**Use this table as a guide to help her develop a growth mindset:**

Growth Mindset			Fixed Mindset	
CHALLENGING YOURSELF	Embrace challenges		Avoid opportunities	
FACING CRITICISM	Learn from feedback		Ignore useful feedback	
MAKING AN EFFORT	See effort as key to success		See effort as useless	
OVERCOMING OBSTACLES	A misstep is a step forward		A misstep is a reason to give up	
WHEN OTHERS SUCCEED	Find inspiration in their performance		Feel threatened and upset	

## Be mindful how you praise her

The way you praise her can also play a key role in helping her develop a growth mindset. Try to praise her for her efforts, not just her accomplishments. For example, you could say: “Well done for doing so well in that test – your hard work and determination really paid off” vs. “Well done for doing so well in that test – you’re so clever”.

## Help her try, fail, learn and keep going #LikeAGirl

Around puberty girls tend to develop a fear of failure, holding themselves back and no longer trying new things. As parents, you can help her shake off her setbacks with self-kindness and perseverance.

- **Embrace positive risk-taking.** If she’s afraid – try and help her break down something big and scary in to smaller steps.
- **Allow her to fail.** Experiencing failure, and then working out how to deal with it, is crucial to building confidence.
- **Be there to help her bounce back** – but **don’t solve her problems for her!** Encourage her to reflect on what went wrong, what she learnt, and what she could do differently next time.
- **Be a good role model!** If you show her how you take risks, and don’t give up after your own mis-steps, you’ll be encouraging her to do the same.



## Helping her speak up

When girls hit puberty, many begin to question themselves and stop advocating for their needs. But you can make a difference! Here are some ways to help:

- **Encourage her to speak up!** Tell her that her voice deserves to be heard and her opinion is valid.
- **Encourage her to drop the apology.** Many girls start apologizing before they even give their opinion. Instead of "Sorry for saying this, but..." suggests she starts with "This is what I think".
- **Don't let her insult her opinion,** and teach her positive self talk. Tell her it's not necessary to put herself down right after she gives her thoughts. Examples to watch out for: "I'm probably wrong" or "I know I'm being dumb".
- **Role model positive self-talk!** Don't apologize or insult yourself either.

## Helping her understand sexual feelings

The hormones the body produces during puberty may cause your daughter to experience new feelings, so it is natural if she's curious about her sexuality and starts having crushes on others. You can help by simply taking the time to discuss this with her.

The below words can **inspire your talk:**

- **Honesty:** facing up to facts and feelings
- **Kindness:** treating people with care
- **Respect:** other people matter, they have worth
- **Empathy:** caring about how the other person feels
- **Consent:** the need for it to be given
- **Accountability:** what she does has consequences

As a result of these hormones changes and new feelings, she may also begin to explore intimate parts of her body, especially the genital area. This is not right or wrong, but you can remind her that it's personal and should be done in private.

## Helping her navigate friendships

When girls go through puberty, peer relationships become paramount. Girls are often worried about what their friends think and that starts to affect how they think about themselves.

Your daughter might start questioning how she looks and dresses, wondering whether her friends are talking behind her back, and suppressing feelings to keep peace. All of that can be a powerful drain on her confidence.

### To help, you can:

- **Ask about her friends** and how she's feeling about them.
- **Encourage her to make new friends** and meet new people if her friends are making her sad or simply to help her broaden her horizons.
- Let her know **it's normal to feel anxious about fitting in** – but it's important to be proud of standing out!
- **Share your own experiences** to help her see that these challenges are normal and can be resolved.
- **Give tips on how to navigate normal relationship conflicts.** For example, encourage her to avoid using insults and to try and understand things from other's perspective.
- Encourage her to **write down what she's experiencing** – so she can reflect on it.
- Encourage her to **talk to a trusted adult**, instead of peers, especially on social media, as it helps prevent gossip from spreading.
- Remind her that **the best way to make a good friend is to be one.**



## Helping her navigate sex & gender

As your daughter grows up she may start questioning her gender identity and what she can and can't do as a girl.

**To help, let's first have a look at a few definitions:**

**Biological sex:** This is based on the genitals we're born with and the chromosomes we have. At birth, most people are either male or female.

**Gender identity:** This is about how we feel and how we think about ourselves when it comes to gender. Most societies recognize two genders – male and female (relating to a person's biological sex) – but some people describe themselves differently, and that's ok.

**Gender roles:** These are socially constructed – they relate to the characteristics and behaviors that are typically thought to go alongside a person's biological sex. They often serve to stereotype girls and boys – and can make them feel like they need to act or behave in certain ways.

**How you can help:**

**Be there to support her:** If your daughter is starting to question her gender identity because she feels that she doesn't fit with society's traditional definition of what it means to be a girl, don't panic. It doesn't mean there is anything wrong with her. It's sometimes just a natural part of growing up – children explore and question. You can help by simply observing, accepting and being on hand to offer, or find, further support if she needs.

**Don't let society limit her:** It's important to remind her that her biological sex doesn't define what she can and can't do. Help her realize that she can do and achieve anything. For example, remind her that girls can play soccer, be strong and be brave! Be careful not to inadvertently stereotype her, or others, yourself.





# The importance of sports

Sports help girls feel better about themselves! The sense of accomplishment, feeling of belonging and ability to see their body as an asset are some of the many benefits that sports participation can offer girls.

As parents, you play a vital role in ensuring girls get in, and stay in, the game. Here are six top tips for helping your daughter keep playing #LikeAGirl:

## 1. Make it fun

Focus on the atmosphere first. When you set the right atmosphere, girls want to be part of the team. For example, you could choose to play in a park on Sunday without making it competitive.

## 2. Praise their process

Praise the steps they take – like training hard, never giving up after a game defeat and trying new techniques – rather than the outcome. This will help her understand that training is a means to learning and progress.

## 3. Help them become friends

The social aspects of sports are an essential aspect of participation. Encourage friendships among their team. Can you have them all for dinner?

## 4. Encourage her to take some ownership of the team

The more girls feel like they have a voice on the team, the more they will feel like they belong. Encourage them to take initiatives for the team – like planning a trip to cheer for their favorite professional team or creating a new training jersey.

### **5. Show up and cheer loudly!**

To help her show that you value her playing sport, try to attend her games as much as possible. Supporting her is one of the most important things you can do as a role model.

### **6. Help her notice her and the team's strengths**

Each girl is unique and has her own set of strengths, such as: integrity, perseverance, gratitude and fairness, that help the team thrive. After each game or practice set aside some time with her to reflect on what strengths were present.

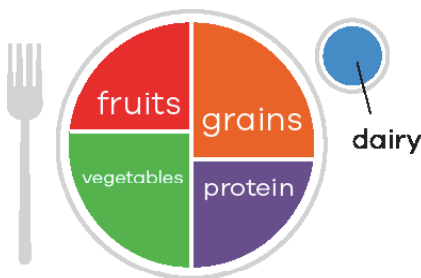


# Helping her stay healthy

## Healthy nutrition

During puberty, your daughter's body needs a lot of energy. It's important to make sure she eats a healthy, well-balanced diet.

**Here is what a healthy meal looks like:**



## Don't forget about iron

The blood she loses during her period can cause her to lose iron, which can make her feel tired. She should try red beans and dark leafy vegetables (like spinach or anything else high in iron), along with a glass of orange juice (or anything high in vitamin C), as this helps the iron absorb into her body more efficiently.

## Sleeping well

Getting enough sleep is an essential part of staying healthy and happy. On average teens need between 8 to 10 hours per night.

**To help, you can make sure she:**

- Sticks to a regular sleep schedule.
- Avoids using screens (e.g. TV, phone) at least one hour before going to bed.
- Uses a comfortable mattress and pillow.
- Exercises daily.

## Helping her stay safe

Here are a few things you can start talking about with your daughter to help her stay safe.

**Self-worth:** one of the most important things you can do to help your daughter stay safe is to help her build her self-worth. When she values herself, she is more likely to advocate for her needs and embrace positive vs. negative risk taking.

**Drugs and alcohol:** remind her that they affect the brain and can cause long term damage. The effect of drugs and alcohol are much greater and long lasting in the young brain than in the adult brain.

**Sexual assault, harassment:** discuss the fact that they exist and are crimes so they need to be reported.

**Internet and social media:** while acknowledging these can be great ways to find out information and connect with others, it's important to remind your daughter to use them safely, responsibly and positively.

**Here are a few tips:**

- **Encourage her to practice good habits** - like not spending too much time on it, or using it before bed time.
- Help her **think through the consequences of potential actions** - such as sharing intimate pictures online.
- Write a **list of rules for social media** together.
- Consider **keeping her account on your phone**, so you can help monitor her usage.
- **Talk to her** frequently about what she sees.
- Help her understand the **"social media filter"** - what she sees is not always real life, or at least it is not the complete picture.

Hopefully, you now feel armed with the tips you need to support your daughter during puberty.

Enjoy this time of exciting changes! Remember, there will be ups and downs. So just do your best to keep her confident!

