

Always Changing & Growing Up

How to best support your student during puberty



always[®]

TAMPAX



Old Spice

An Important Time in Their Life!

Dear Parent,

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

This guide gives you lots of practical tips. It delves into key areas, such as how to answer his/her questions about puberty, helping your daughter choose the right period products, or helping your son with selecting a deodorant. Inside the guide you'll find information to help you steward him/her on a course to stay healthy and confident - and so much more!



If you're receiving this guide because your student has just gone through a Puberty Education session at their school, you have a unique opportunity to continue the conversation and go over the booklet they would have received. If you're simply looking for resources to learn and prepare

for (or continue) the conversation, we've got plenty of tips to help!

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

Yours,

The Always Expert Team

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Tips for Having an Ongoing Conversation

How to start the talk

- Do your best to **create an open-door policy** when it comes to talking with your child about their body and their feelings. If they come to talk to you and you're busy, make sure to share that you're happy and grateful they came to you and that you will find an alternative time when you can have a conversation together.
- **Look for natural moments** to bring up the discussion. It might be when you're shopping at the store and pass by the aisle for hygiene or personal care products, or in the bathroom together, or in reaction to something you saw on a show or movie.
- Try to **understand what they already know** about puberty – and adapt accordingly. This will help you understand their level of knowledge and you can determine the best place to continue the discussion.
- You'll want to **ensure they understand what puberty is about** and why it happens, as well as what changes to expect for both girls and boys. Having a basic understanding can allow you to go into more details when she or he is ready.
- **Encourage open and frequent dialogue** with your child. If possible, make it a family discussion. You will help them know that they can easily come to you and your significant other when they have questions or want to talk about what they are experiencing.

Overview of Growth and Development at Puberty

Your student is growing up. Growing independent, strong and into a woman or man. Puberty isn't just the time when girls get their period; it's when girls and boys learn to be leaders, better friends, and better individuals.

Puberty can start as early as 7 years old for some girls or as late as 12 for others. Whereas puberty can start as early as 9 years old of some boys or as late as 14 for others. Puberty is a series of changes that their bodies will go through as they grow up. It can be a confusing time. These changes are completely normal and natural; they will happen to all women and men. The goal of the Parent's Guide is to assist you as you explain puberty to your daughter or son. It includes helpful tips from experts. Together, we can give students the tools to grow healthy bodies, strong minds, and true confidence.



Every Body is Changing

Puberty

Puberty is a time of physical and emotional change that happens as children grow and mature. These changes are normal, they're a sign of healthy growth and all girls and boys experience them!

They usually start occurring earlier for girls (between the ages of 7 and 12), than they do for boys (between 9 and 14). But keep in mind, the time puberty begins is different for everyone. Their time is the right time for them!

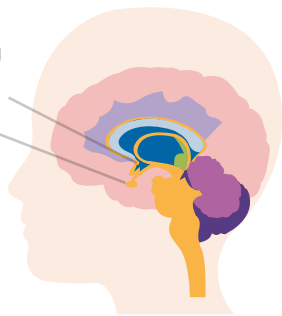
So, why do we all change?

Puberty simply happens to prepare their bodies for reproducing. During puberty, two parts of the brain called the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland start making more hormones.

Hormones are chemical substances that act as messengers in the body and make changes happen. Some hormones will make their bones grow longer, others will guide the development of their brain or the changes in their reproductive system.

Hypothalamus

Pituitary Gland



Did you know? Girls and boys produce all the same hormones, but in different levels. Boys have more testosterone and girls have more estrogen. That's one of the things that makes us different!

Changes During Puberty

Now you know why changes occur, let's take a look at what changes children go through during puberty.

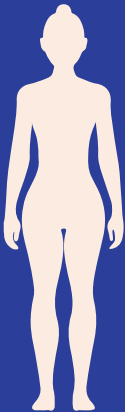
Female

- Breasts start to grow
- Vaginal discharge begins
- Hips and thighs broaden
- Labia may change

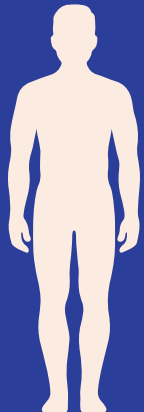
Male

- Breasts can grow
- Voice cracks and gets deeper
- Adam's apple enlarges
- Shoulders get larger and body gets more muscular
- Chest hair may appear
- Penis and testicles grow

Shared



- Emotions and feelings may seem stronger
- Brain development improves the way they think and understand
- New feelings of attraction may begin
- They grow taller
- Skin gets oilier and pimples may appear
- Sweating increases, body develops own odor
- Body hair grows: face, armpit, leg and pubic



These changes can be tough for many adolescents, so it's helpful to support them and encourage them to support each other through this stage in life.

Dealing With all These Changes

With all these changes happening, it's important for girls and boys to learn how to keep their body healthy. As they're growing up, it's time for them to start making their own choices and developing healthy habits.

Breasts

For girls, developing breasts is exciting because it's one of the first signs that their body is changing. Their breasts grow gradually; most of the time they won't notice it.

As their breasts develop, they might sometimes feel uncomfortable or sore; this is normal. Like everything else, breasts come in all different shapes and sizes, and develop at different rates. One may grow larger than the other; that's okay. If your daughter is worried, advise her to talk to a trusted adult or doctor.

Your student may think that only girls grow breasts during puberty, but many boys actually have some breast growth during puberty, too – and it's normal! It usually just involves a little enlargement of the nipple area or a small amount of breast growth. For boys who have this, it almost always disappears within 6 months to a year or so.



Bra basics

Once a young woman's breasts develop, wearing a bra provides support and coverage that can help her feel more comfortable. Additionally, as breasts grow, nipples may become more visible through clothing, so a bra can also provide better privacy. It's important to have a proper fitting bra for the support she'll need. Plus, bras come in tons of fun colors and designs, so she can find ones that match her personal style. She should talk to a parent or trusted adult to help find a bra that fits.

Skin care

As the skin on boys and girls faces gets oilier they may start getting pimples, blackheads or acne. If they get acne, it doesn't mean they're not clean or they've done something wrong. Most of the time, it's related to their new hormones that cause the extra oiliness, and it is also genetic. The good news is that developing a regular skin care routine can help!



3 steps to better skin

- 1. Clean** – To help get rid of everyday dirt and oil on their face, washing twice daily with a gentle soap or cleanser is recommended. It can be medicated or non-medicated. Deep cleanse with a cleanser containing salicylic acid (look for "salicylic acid" to be listed in the active ingredients on the back of the bottle).
- 2. Prevent** – To help prevent pores from becoming clogged, they should use a salicylic acid product all over their face. Additionally, they need to make sure to moisturize after each wash so their skin stays hydrated.
- 3. Treat** – To help eliminate pimples quickly, suggest that they use a benzoyl peroxide product to unclog pores.

Acne do's and don'ts

- Do eat a healthy diet and make sure to get regular exercise and proper rest.
- Don't squeeze any pimples – this can cause scars and may even cause more acne
- Don't scrub skin hard. This may actually spread acne or make it worse.

Smile care

Part of staying healthy is making sure teeth are kept clean. Your student should make sure he or she brushes them properly every morning and every night with a good toothpaste and a soft bristled brush. Toothpaste helps fight cavities, strengthen teeth enamel and freshen breath. They should also floss daily in between their teeth and a mouthwash can help reach places that brushing may have missed.



Hair care

Puberty may cause their hair to become oilier, thicker, coarser – even curlier or straighter. Some boys and girls need to wash their hair more often, some don't. The important thing is for them to develop a routine for taking care of their hair and scalp.

1. Wash with shampoo

A good shampoo will clean their hair by removing deposits such as dirt, sebum and styling products. It can also protect it from damage and nourish it, too!

2. Apply conditioner

The role of the conditioner is to untangle their hair and make it easier to manage. It will also keep it moisturized and protect it from damage.

Sweat and body odor

Everybody sweats, or perspires. It's a normal and important function – it helps regulate their body temperature. But once they hit puberty, sweating can also cause body odor. Their body actually has two different types of sweat glands. Eccrine glands start working at birth, producing a clear and odorless perspiration. But when they hit puberty, their apocrine glands kick in, producing the kind of sweat that can smell bad when it comes into contact with the bacteria on their skin. It's these apocrine glands that activate when they are in stressful situations.



Body odor busters

Wash regularly with soap – at least once a day and especially after physical activity. They need to make sure to wash their underarms thoroughly and apply deodorant or antiperspirant at least once a day.

What's the difference between deodorants and antiperspirants?

Deodorants are basically perfumes that help mask or cover their body odor. **Antiperspirants** help stop the body odor from developing by reducing sweat. Both come in many different styles and fragrances and are usually combined in one product. Advise them to talk to their parent about choosing the right product.



Body hair

During puberty, thicker and darker hair begins to appear in many new places, such as legs, underarms, chest and in the pubic area. Having body hair is normal and natural. Some people may decide to remove it, some may choose not to.

If your daughter feels like she wants to start removing her hair, instruct her how to do it with her own razor, by epilating or using any other existing method that is safe for her.



Your son may also notice hair starting to grow on his upper lip and chin and may want to start shaving or grooming it. Before he starts shaving, give him advice and his own razor. At first he may not need to shave very often but eventually, as it grows faster and thicker, he may want to start shaving more regularly, even daily. Like most things, the more he shaves, the better he'll get at it!



Changes to a Boy's Reproductive System

The most significant changes that happen during puberty are the changes that happen to our reproductive organs.

What happens to boys?

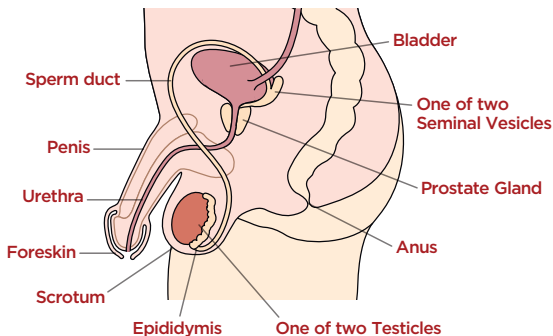
During puberty, boys start to make more androgens (reproductive hormones), especially testosterone, which causes a lot of the male puberty changes and makes the penis and testicles grow.

As testosterone increases, boys begin having more erections, which is when the penis becomes stiff and sticks up as it fills with blood. During puberty, most erections happen randomly, usually for no reason.

Eventually, the testicles begin making the male reproductive cell called sperm. This is the cell that can fertilize the female egg to help create a pregnancy.

Reinforce with your son – just because his body is now making sperm, it does not mean that he needs to start thinking about becoming a dad.

Male reproductive system



FAQs

Do men stop having erections when they get older?

No. Healthy males of all ages, from babies to old men, can get erections. They occur more commonly during and after puberty.

Does it matter what size their penis is?

Not at all! Penises do vary in length and shape from person to person, but not as much as your students may think. Remember, the size of a penis has nothing to do with how manly a boy is or whether he can become a father (if that's what he wants to do one day).

What is circumcision?

This is a minor surgical procedure, usually performed soon after birth, which removes all or part of the foreskin of the penis. A circumcision is not usually considered medically necessary, but it may be performed for religious or cultural reasons, or because it makes it easier to keep the penis clean. To help prevent the growth of bacteria, uncircumcised boys and men should wash under the foreskin every day. Remember – circumcised or not, the penis works the same.

What are wet dreams?

Sometimes boys can ejaculate when they are asleep. This is called a nocturnal emission, more commonly known as a "wet dream." Usually they happen without disturbing their sleep - they may just notice that their pajamas or sheets feel sticky when they wake up. This is nothing to worry about – most boys have them. They will experience them less frequently after their body has gone through puberty, because as they grow older they'll start having more control over their body.

Changes to a Girl's Reproductive System

What happens to girls?

During puberty, girls start to produce more estrogen and progesterone. Estrogen causes her reproductive organs to grow, mature, and prepare to start their menstrual cycle. It is a very normal, healthy and positive part of growing up. Their menstrual cycle prepares their body for pregnancy.



Most of the time, an unfertilized egg occurs, and then the lining of their uterus will shed and leave their body as a period.

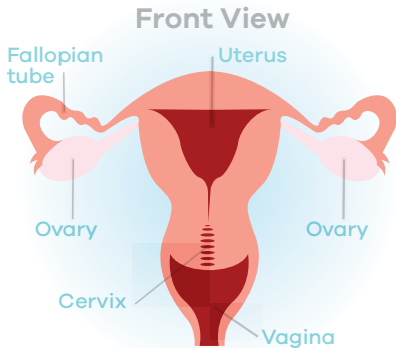
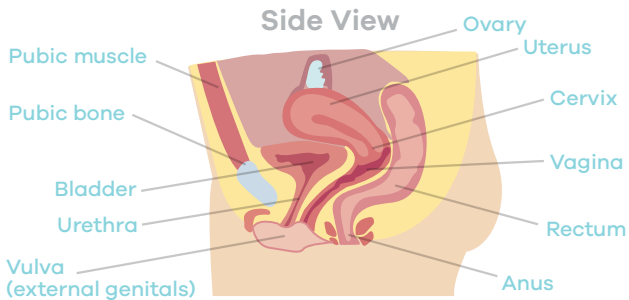
Reinforce with your daughter – just because her body is now able to prepare itself to carry a baby, it does not mean that she needs to start thinking about becoming a mom.

Her Period

Understanding the menstrual cycle

A woman's menstrual cycle is the time from the first day of one period to the first day of the next period. The average time this takes is 28 days, but between 21 and 35 days is normal. Then the cycle starts again.

For many girls, their period will most likely be irregular at first. They could have one period one month and then two periods the next, or wait as long as six months for the next one.

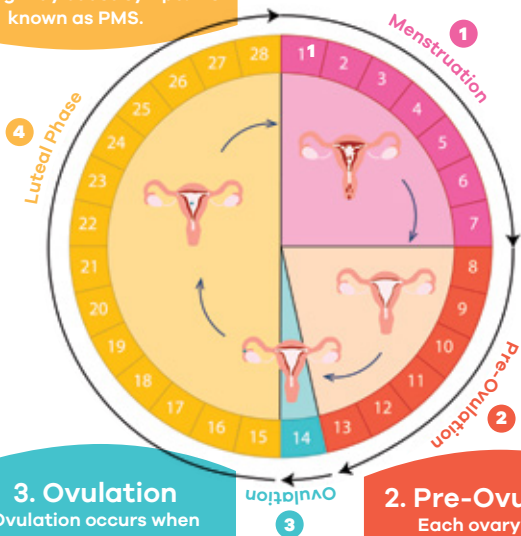


4. Pre-Menstrual (Luteal Phase)

The endometrium is thick and ready to receive a fertilized egg, but if fertilization does not happen, the lining is no longer needed. As a result, hormone levels change and the lining is shed. The hormones and shedding may cause symptoms known as PMS.

1. Menstruation

The menstrual period, which is made of endometrial tissue, blood, and other fluids, exits the uterus through the cervix and vagina.



3. Ovulation

Ovulation occurs when a mature egg is released from the ovary. The egg travels along the fallopian tube to the uterus. If a sperm fertilizes the egg, the cells can begin to form a pregnancy. Around the time of ovulation you may notice increased vaginal discharge.

2. Pre-Ovulation

Each ovary holds thousands of eggs, and every month, rising hormones cause the ovary to produce a mature egg. During this time, estrogen causes the endometrium to get thicker.

Period FAQs

As we just reviewed, during menstruation, a woman will shed the lining of her uterus (made up of tissue, blood and other fluids) through her vagina — this is known as a period. Periods are simply a sign that her body is healthy and well.

How long does a period last?

It varies. For most girls and women, a period usually lasts between 3 to 7 days.

If she hasn't started her period yet, is she late?

There is no right time for her first period to come. She will most likely to get it between the ages of 10 and 16, but every girl is different. Her period will start when her body is ready.

Why and how to keep track of their cycle?

Everyone's menstrual cycle is unique. Keeping track of her cycle will help her understand how her body works and when her period will start. It can also be a big help for her doctor if she ever thinks there is a problem. She can simply use a period calendar to keep track of her cycle. She can find one on [Always.com](https://www.always.com)

What if her period is irregular?

Many girls have unpredictable periods for the first 2 years. They could have a period one month, then skip several months before the next one.

How much blood will she 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 their body contains 4 liters of blood on average, it doesn't miss the little bit lost during a period – and their body makes up for it quickly.

Will her period hurt?

While periods themselves don't hurt, a lot of women experience pain or cramps before their period. We'll learn more on how to deal with this discomfort later in this guide.

If your daughter hasn't started her period by age 16, or her period remains irregular, you should consult her doctor.

An Overview of Period Protection

How should a girl deal with the menstrual fluid coming out of her vagina? There are lots of options. As she learns about them and tries different things she'll be able to decide what works best for her.

Period Protection	Worn Inside or Outside the Body	Disposable or Reusable
 PADS	Outside	Both
 TAMPONS	Inside	Disposable
 CUPS	Inside	Reusable
 MENSTRUAL UNDERWEAR	Outside	Reusable

Don't get caught by surprise

Before her cycle becomes regular, her period may happen unexpectedly. It's a really good idea for her to always be prepared—especially when she's at school, camp or just out with friends.

Below are some tips to make sure she's never caught off guard:

- Keep a pad or tampon in her purse, schoolbag, or locker for herself or a friend.
- Start **using a pantyliner** a few days before she expects her period to start. It will help protect her underwear from discharge and light period flow.
- If she doesn't have period protection available, or simply can't afford it, she can ask a friend, teachers or school nurse, or use rolled up toilet paper until she gets a pad.



Learning About Pads

Most girls start with pads to manage their period, as they're really easy to use. A pad, or sanitary towel, is a piece of absorbent material that she will stick to the inside of her underwear to absorb her menstrual flow.

Understanding a pad is fairly easy



Download the free
Demonstration Instructions
from pgschoolprograms.com
to use with Always pads.
Help her see how pads open,
attach, and absorb.

How to use a pad



1. Wash hands with soap and water before changing your pad.



2. Open the wrapper of your pad.



3. Detach the pad from its wrapper and remove the paper strip that covers the wings.



4. Attach the sticky part securely to the inside center of your underwear. Wrap the wings around it. When done, wash your hands with soap and water.

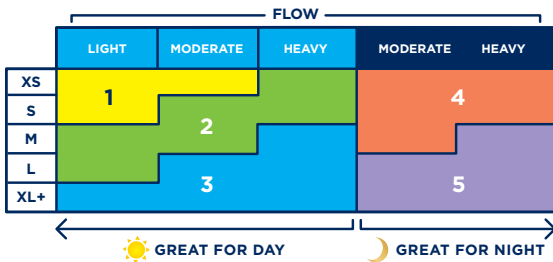


Change your pad every 4 to 8 hours, or more often if your flow is heavy. Don't forget to use clean underwear every day; change them if they become soiled.

Choosing a pad

It is important that your daughter chooses a pad that will be the best fit for her. Always pads have different shapes, lengths and levels of absorbencies so she can choose hers according to her shape and flow. The pad she chooses should be touching her body in order to minimize the risk of leaks.

The better it fits, the better it protects!



Types of Always® pads

Always Radiant™ and Always Infinity®.

An absorbent thin pad made with a soft cover that feels incredibly light. Look for the Always Radiant and Infinity pads in a box.



Ultra Thin. A thin pad that provides great protection and comfort without the bulk of a maxi pad. Look for the green Always bag.



Maxi. A thicker pad with a close body fit and gentle, panty-hugging shape for comfort. Look for the blue Always bag.

How to dispose of a pad

Bin it – Don't flush it!

1. Fold the pad up & wrap it in the wrapper from a new pad or in toilet paper if she doesn't have a wrapper available.

2. Put the wrapped up pad in the waste bin and ensure the lid is closed once the product has been disposed.

























Are Always pads safe?

Every woman and girl deserves what's best for their body. At Always, we have more than 500 scientists working across the globe to ensure our products are 100% safe and comply with all laws and regulations - so she can use them with confidence. For more information visit Always.com.

Always® pads

A range of period protection is available for her period needs. Always pads are designed to fit different body shapes and sizes, and to provide protection for all types of period flows (from a light flow to a heavy flow). Whether she prefers thick pads or thin pads, or day or overnight protection, there are several options of pads to choose from to fit her shape and flow.

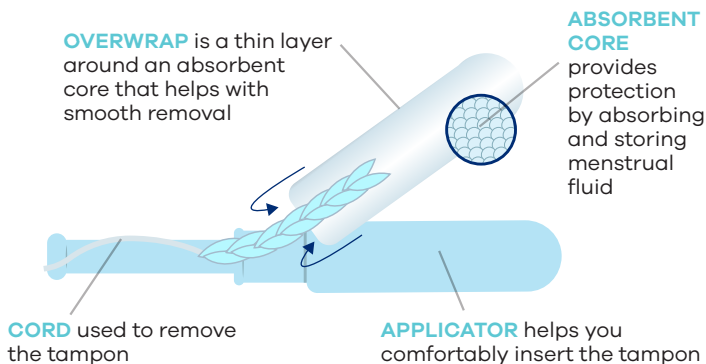
	Radiant™	Infinity® stylish & absorbent	Ultra Thin thin & absorbent	Maxi thick & absorbent	
Slender, Teen					shorter pad & daytime protection
Size 1, Regular					
Size 2, Heavy Flow					longer pad & overnight protection
Size 3, Extra Heavy Flow					
Size 4, Overnight					
Size 5, Extra Heavy Overnight					

Learning About Tampons

A tampon is a type of period protection made from soft materials, that your daughter will insert in her vagina to soak up menstrual fluid before it leaves her body. Tampons can give her the protection and comfort she'll need to move freely, whether she's in class, on the field, or in the pool!

Keep in mind: Tampons go in her vagina (not her urethra). That means she can still pee while wearing a tampon, as the tampon does not go in the same hole as where her pee comes from.

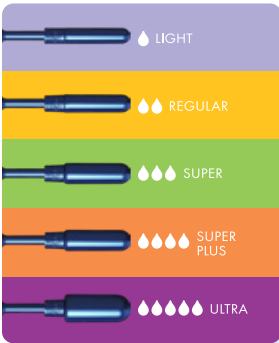
Understanding a tampon is fairly easy



TAMPAX

Choosing a tampon

Tampons come in different levels of absorbencies. Her flow is different every day. Her tampon should be, too. Choosing the right tampon absorbency throughout her period can make a big difference in protecting her from leaks and helping her have a comfortable experience.



We recommend she start with using a regular absorbency tampon. If she finds it is difficult to remove her tampon after 4-8 hours and there are still white parts on her tampon when she removes it, she should try switching to a lower absorbency. If she finds she is having to change it very frequently, she should try switching to a higher absorbency.



Bin it – Don't flush it!

Too many people still believe tampons, wrappers or applicators can be flushed in the toilet. Good habits make a difference. She can contribute to the care for the environment by not flushing her period products and disposing them in the bin instead.



What's TSS?

TSS, or Toxic Shock Syndrome, is a rare but serious infection that has been associated with tampon use. It is caused by a certain type of bacteria that may live on healthy skin, but become a problem if they grow too rapidly. It isn't just associated with tampon use, it may also occur in men, children, and women who are not menstruating.

TSS is treatable, but the earlier you catch it the better. Be aware of the warning signs:

- Sudden high fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sunburn-like rash
- Dizziness
- Muscle ache
- Fainting/near fainting when standing

TSS can rapidly progress from flu-like symptoms to a serious illness that can be fatal. If a girl or woman has one or more of the warning signs above, she should immediately remove her tampon and contact a doctor. Tell them her symptoms, that she was using tampons and she thinks she may have TSS. Also, advise her to consult her doctor before she uses tampons again if she has had TSS warning signs in the past or if she has any questions about TSS or tampon use.

Although TSS is rare, here are a few ways to reduce your risk of getting it:

- Use the lowest absorbency necessary for your flow
- Alternate between tampons and pads during your period
- Look out for the warning signs above

Are Tampax tampons safe?

Tampax tampons have been trusted by millions of girls and women since 1936. Our scientists are working across the globe to ensure our products are 100% safe so she can use them with confidence. If she wants to learn more on safety and quality standards tell her to visit Tampax.com.

Discharge, What Is It?

Your daughter probably noticed that her underwear sometimes has traces of a creamy white/yellowish fluid. This is called discharge. It comes from her vagina and is **perfectly normal**, natural and a healthy sign that her body is functioning properly – all women have it. It helps prevent the vagina from drying out and protects it from infections. Similar to the way tears clean and protect your eyes.

The amount of vaginal discharge varies during the menstrual cycle as hormone levels in the body change. If her discharge is significantly different than usual, has a bad smell or she experiences itching in her intimate area she should talk to a trusted adult and go see a doctor.

All you need to know about pantliners

A pantliner is worn on the inside of her underwear like a pad, and most are smaller and thinner than pads and can feel invisible.

Unlike pads (which are designed to be used during her period) pantliners are designed to be worn every day. She may want to try wearing them as part of her daily hygiene routine, like putting on deodorant.



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. This is why we design our products to have as little impact on the environment as possible. We are also launching new projects that will help with the recycling of the period products we create.



Caring for those in need

At Always, we believe that every girl has the right to be able to manage her period with dignity, and that no girl should have to miss school and things she loves because of her period.

If your family is struggling to afford period products, have your daughter speak to the school nurse.



Premenstrual Syndrome and Period Cramps

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

Between ovulation and the first day of her period, a woman's hormones levels go up and down. These fluctuations can sometimes make her feel more emotional than normal and cause physical symptoms. These symptoms are usually called Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) and are very normal.

Common PMS symptoms that you might experience:

- Feeling swollen or bloated
- Change in appetite
- Breast tenderness
- Abdominal cramps and feeling queasy
- Acne or skin rash

- Mood changes: feeling sad, tearful, tired or irritable
- Headaches

How to manage PMS?

- Your daughter should chart her symptoms and be aware of when she may experience them
- Get enough rest
- Exercise
- Take time for herself
- Practice deep breathing exercises
- Eat foods rich in fiber and low in sugar and fat
- Listen to how she feels and don't feel bad if she wants to curl up on the sofa instead of going out with her friends

Period Cramps

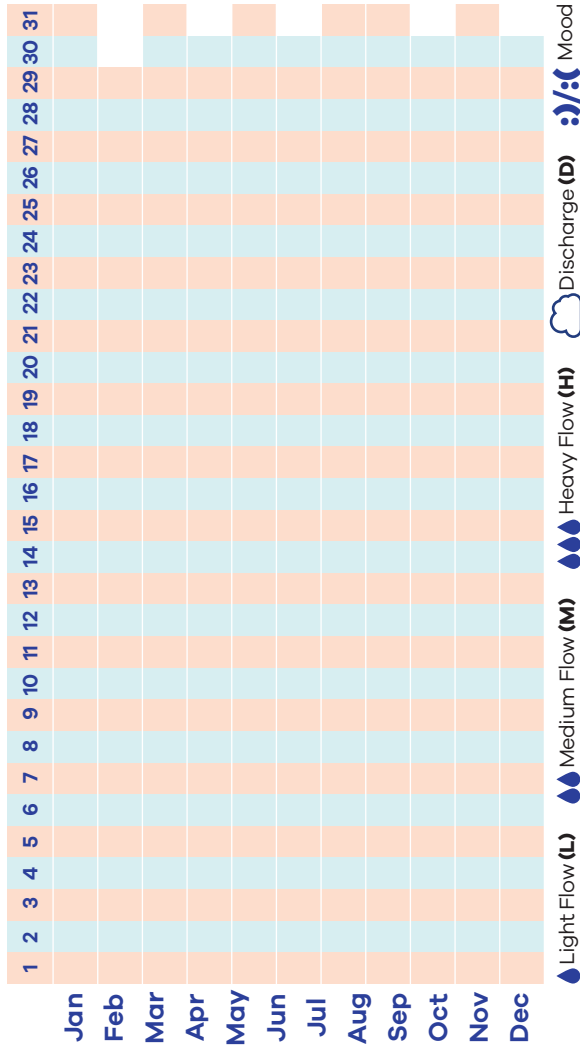
Cramps can occur just before or during her period when the muscle of her uterus contracts to make the lining of her uterus leave her vagina as menstrual flow.

How to treat them?

- Moderate exercise and stretching
- Use a hot water bottle or warm towel on her belly
- Take a warm bath
- Practice deep breathing exercises

Period Tracker

Everyone's menstrual cycle is unique. Your daughter can use this calendar or go to [Always.com](https://www.always.com) to keep track of her menstrual cycle to help her prepare for her next period. She simply needs to mark the days she has her period and track her mood, too, so she can see when her mood changes could be explained by her hormones!



Staying Confident and Healthy

Your child's brain is changing, too!

While changes to your daughter or son's body are obvious, there's a lot of changes happening to their brain, too! They're developing new, stronger emotions and these changes can affect their confidence. These emotions are normal and they have control over whether they listen to the negative or focus on the positive.

Building brain power & embracing the Growth Mindset

Their brain is like a muscle, so they need to exercise it. When they take on challenges and practice until they overcome them, neurones in their brain create new and stronger connections. And when their brain gets stronger, their skills do, too. The growth mindset is the belief that their mind can grow and change with practice. They can start training using the table below.

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

Take risks and keep going

Advise your son or daughter – they only truly fail when they don't even try, so they should take positive risks. It can be scary, hard and, well, risky. It can also be exciting, fun and rewarding!

Here are a few tips to take positive risks:

- **Don't be afraid to fail!** If they fail, use it as an opportunity to learn, get stronger and keep going!
- **Try again, and again, and again.** Know that sometimes they have to keep practicing and trying new ways to get better.
- **Remember their past achievements.** Have your child share a past accomplishment to help them feel positive and confident.
- **Break big things down** in to smaller, more manageable steps.
- **We all have strengths** - they should focus their attention on theirs. It will help them become more confident and will give them energy!

Powerful words to help them out

A majority of students believe words can harm. The good news is that changing the words they use can change their world.

Try these words:

YET! Yet is a very powerful word. They can use it to remind them self that though they haven't accomplished it yet, they will!

AND. When they praise them self, it's easy to add "but" to lessen their success. Have them try using "and" instead. So instead of "I'm pretty good at geometry, but I still have tha B", have them try saying "and I am getting better every week".

I CAN. Have they ever said things like "I'm totally going to fail this test, I got so many questions wrong"? Advise them to lose the negative talk and think about how they can study harder and do better next time.

Making good decisions

They're probably starting to earn more freedom at school and at home – and probably more responsibilities, too! As a result, they'll be making more decisions on their own than when they were younger. They'll need to evaluate and make sense of all the influencing factors in their life such as friends, parents, teachers and things they see in the media and read on the internet.

At times, it can be difficult to know what to think and how to act. Learning to make the right decision is an important part of growing up. It's easy to get into situations that are challenging when they don't take the time to think about their decisions.

Remember, great decision-making skills are learned – no one is born with them!

I-D-E-A-L solution building

IDENTIFY the problem

DESCRIBE all the ways you might solve the problem

EVALUATE all the possible solutions

ACT on one of the solutions and try it out

LEARN if your solution solved the problem effectively

Sex, Gender & Society

Let's start with a few definitions:

Biological sex: A person's biological sex is based on the genitals they're born with and the chromosomes they have. At birth, most people are either male or female.

Gender identity: This is about how a person feels and how he/she thinks about themselves when it comes to gender. Everyone's gender identity is unique to them and should be respected.

Gender roles and stereotyping: These are socially constructed – they relate to characteristics and behaviors that are typically thought to go alongside a person's biological sex. They can often stereotype girls and boys.

They might have started to notice that people expect them to look, act or behave in a certain way just because they're a girl or boy. We call this stereotyping.

Don't let society limit what they can do!

Their biological sex shouldn't define what they can or can't do – and stereotyping someone because of their gender, or thinking that someone is better or worse because of their gender, can be very harmful. Reinforce with your students – they don't have to let these norms limit them. Girls and boys can be whoever they want to be! Encourage them to stay strong and believe that they can achieve anything!

They're great, just the way they are

We are all different and that's what makes us beautiful. Imagine if we all looked the same – how boring would that be? If someone teases them about how they look, they can try to ignore it. There is no right or wrong way to look. Instead, they need to try and focus on staying healthy and happy, be proud of their uniqueness and be supportive of those around them.

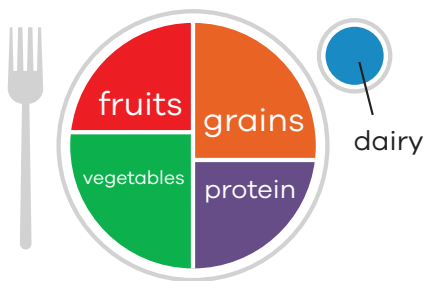


Healthy Choices

Eat well

Taking care of their body also means supplying their body with the energy and nutrients it needs. Growing like they do during puberty requires a lot of energy and most of it comes from the food they eat. This is why it's important to make sure they understand the value of eating a healthy, well-balanced diet.

Here is what a healthy meal looks like:



Be active

Being physically active through sports or other physical activities helps keep their body healthy and boost their energy levels! The key to enjoying it is for them to pick something they like, such as – dancing like crazy to their favorite song, playing goalie on a soccer team, or challenging their brother or sister to a running race.

Sleep well

Getting enough sleep is an essential part of staying healthy and happy. On average they'll need between 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night.

Tips to getting enough sleep:

- They should stick to a regular sleep schedule
- Avoid watching and using screens (e.g. TV, phone) one hour before going to bed
- Use a comfortable mattress and pillow
- Exercise daily



Visit the doctor

Regular healthcare is important, take your son or daughter to visit their doctor and dentist on a regular basis. Additionally, as your daughter gets older and starts her period, you may also want her to start seeing an OB-GYN – a doctor that specializes in women’s health.

Stay safe

During puberty, they’re going through so many changes that everything seems possible, and this is great. They just need to remember to stay safe, too.

- **Say no to drugs**—whether or not they’re illegal, they can affect their brain and cause long term damage.
- **Treat everyone with respect**—nobody should be mean to others.
 - Stop and think before they say or do something hurtful.
 - If they are being bullied they need to try to speak up and ask the bully to stop. If speaking up seems too hard, they need to walk away and find an adult to help.
 - Talk to an adult they trust. Don’t keep their feelings inside; they can help them make a plan to improve their situation.
 - If they think they have bullied someone in the past, they should apologize. Everyone feels better.

Healthy Relationships

Taking care of others around you

During puberty, everyone is going through changes that can be hard to deal with. They need to look out for others and share with a trusted adult if they're worried about any of their friends.

Discovering new feelings

At this particular moment of their life when their body is producing a lot more of hormones, they will start to experience new feelings. Some of these feelings may cause them to be more curious about their sexuality and it's good to remember that this curiosity is totally normal.

Personal intimacy

As these hormones can make people feel more curious about their new feelings, some may begin to explore intimate parts of their body, especially the genital area. This is not right or wrong, but it's personal and should be done in private.

Intimate feelings towards others

They might also begin to see others as more than just friends, and start having new feelings and crushes. This is completely normal! They need to just remember to keep in mind that others may not feel the same as they do, and it's important to respect other's personal choices.



Continue the Conversation

Your child may find talking to their friends and family about their feelings and questions during puberty can help. It can also help friends and family better understand and support them.

It's important that your son or daughter shouldn't feel that they need to cope with everything on their own. Your child should be able to talk to you or another trusted adult for advice and to help answer his/her questions. As adults who have experienced puberty, you can provide lots of good advice and tips.

To help start the conversation, you can follow these tips:

Keep it casual: Find a time when you typically talk with your child, and use it to discuss the things they've learned in this guide. They might want to ask you what it was like when you were younger and experienced puberty.



Write it down: Sometimes it may help to have your child write down their questions. This can help ensure they get all their questions answered.

Be direct: Ask them to take a deep breath and share how they're feeling. Let them know you have probably experienced similar feelings at some point in your life, too!

Celebrate it: For girls, getting her first period can be a great moment to celebrate with those around them. Of course, if they're interested. Ask her if she wants to share the news with her family or best friends and use it as an opportunity to do something nice.

For more puberty
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