This booklet, which was designed with the help of youth peer educators, is for youth groups and friends to share. Read it and learn about reproductive health—for now and as you journey into adult life.
AS YOU BECOME AN ADULT, new thoughts, feelings, and physical changes are normal, but they can be confusing.

Learning how your body works and what physical and emotional changes to expect can help you to relax.

Remember: What happens to you happens to every person during puberty.

This booklet will help you learn what to expect and how to handle the changes.
WHAT IS PUBERTY AND HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

• Puberty is the time in a person’s life when she or he changes from being a girl to a woman or from being a boy to a man.
• Puberty does not happen all at once. It usually begins between the ages of 8 and 16 years and can last until around age 20. Girls usually start puberty a couple of years before boys.
• Puberty starts in the center of your brain, where one part of it (the size of a grape) lights up and sends out chemicals called “hormones” to make you grow.
• In time, hormones are released in your body day and night. Girls and boys notice their bodies starting to change.
• Next, a girl’s ovaries begin releasing 2 sex hormones called estrogen and progesterone. A boy’s testicles start releasing a hormone called testosterone.
• Puberty is when a girl becomes physically able to get pregnant and a boy becomes able to make a girl pregnant.

Do you know your body parts? Read on to learn more.
FEMALE ANATOMY

All girls have the same body parts, but they might not look exactly the same or may not be the same exact size or shape. This is healthy!

INNER REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

- The **vagina** is the passage between the cervix and outside world. It is about 3–5 inches long (but during sex, the back two-thirds of the vagina can double in length and width). The vagina produces secretions to keep clean and for lubrication.
- The **uterus** is the organ where a fetus normally grows. A nonpregnant uterus is about the size of your fist.
- The **ovaries**—2 of them, each about one and one-half inches long—are attached to each side of the fallopian tubes. They both make eggs and produce female hormones (estrogen and progesterone). During ovulation, they release one or more eggs.
- The **fallopian tubes** are each about 4 inches long and as thin as a strand of hair. These 2 tubes float near the ovaries, and after ovulation they transport eggs to the uterus.
- The **cervix**, located at the lower part of the uterus, connects to the end of the vagina.
• The **vulva** is the outer part of the female organs and protects the vaginal opening, urethra (where urine flows out), mons pubis, labia, and clitoris.

• The **mons pubis** is a pad of fatty tissue covers the pubic bone; it is usually covered in hair.

• The **labia** are like 2 sets of lips surrounding the clitoris, the vaginal opening, and the urethra. The outer labia are called labia majora, while the inner labia are called labia minora.

• The **clitoris** is the only organ in a woman’s body whose only purpose is for sexual sensation. It contains anywhere from 6,000 to 8,000 nerve endings (about 4 times as many as in the head of the penis).

• The **urethra** is a tube inside the body that carries urine (pee) outside.
Your body changes and begins growing faster. Some girls have growing pains in their arms and legs. Growth takes place over time, and how tall you will be at the end of it depend on a lot of things—but mostly has to do with how tall the other people in your family are.

- **Your breasts** change size and shape. Some girls’ breasts grow bigger than others, some have nipples bigger than others, and some girls have one breast that is bigger than the other. This is healthy. You are OK!
- **Your hips** widen. You might not notice this because it is a very slow change that helps your body prepare for being able to have a baby.
- **The clitoris** grows. The inner lips of your vulva become more bulging and may stick out from the outer lips. They might change color, too. Vulvas are as different as faces, and that is healthy.
- **Hair** grows in your armpits and around and above your vulva (that’s called pubic hair), and the hair on your legs gets thicker and darker.
- You **sweat** more under your arms—you may smell different, or the smell may be stronger.
- You get **pimples** (acne); this happens to most people.
- **Periods** begin (called menses). Menstrual bleeding usually starts around age 12, but it could be sooner or later. Once a girl has a period, she can become pregnant.
Q. Why does the timing of my menstrual cycle keep changing?
A. Many girls have irregular periods for the first couple of years, while their hormones are changing. The average menstrual cycle is between 21 and 35 days, and bleeding lasts around 5 days. Each person is different. Irregularity is no cause for concern.

Q. What causes my vagina to itch?
A. Itching could be due to hormonal changes during the month, or possibly an infection. Talk to a health care provider.

Q. What is the milky secretion from my vagina?
A. The vagina and inside reproductive organs naturally produce mucus to clean your body, and it exits through the vagina as a milky secretion. If there is itching, foul-smelling discharge, or pain in the vagina, talk to a health care provider.

Q. If a boy wants to play sex and I don’t want to, what can I do?
A. Say “no, I am not comfortable with that.” If he pushes or begs you, walk away. Avoid being alone, and hang out in public places.

Q. If I play sex, how can I avoid pregnancy?
A. The safest and healthiest way to avoid pregnancy and infection is not to play sex (abstinence)! But if you do play sex, use a condom and another reliable contraceptive.

Q. Why do many people use family planning/contraception?
A. Because they do not want to have an unplanned pregnancy.
SOME COMMON MYTHS (NOT TRUE)

If you hear these, do not believe them!

- Contraceptives...
  - Cause abnormal babies (dull or lame children) — FALSE!
  - Cause cancer — FALSE!
  - Make a person weak — FALSE!
  - Cause damage to youth under age 18 — FALSE!

- If a guy “pulls out” before cumming, a girl cannot get pregnant. FALSE!

- You cannot get pregnant if, after sex, you take tea leaves, stand on your head, take a bath, or pee. FALSE!

- If you swallow aspirin after sex, you will not get pregnant. FALSE!
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Is it good or bad to use contraception?
A. If any person is sexually active and wants to avoid pregnancy, he or she should use contraceptives. Condoms are the only type of contraceptive that can protect against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV, if used all the time and correctly.

Q. If I start using contraceptives early in my life, will I have problems getting pregnant in the future?
A. No, your chances of getting pregnant are not affected.

Q. If a girl is a virgin and has sex, can she get pregnant?
A. Yes, if she has had her first menses.

Q. If I masturbate, do I remain a virgin?
A. Yes. Masturbation is when a person strokes or rubs their vagina or penis (genitals) for sexual pleasure.

Q. Is it true that when having sex for the first time, a girl cannot get pregnant because the guy’s sperm is not mature enough?
A. No, not true.
MALE ANATOMY

All boys (males) have the same body parts, but they might not look exactly the same or may not be the same exact size or shape. This is healthy!

- The **penis** is a muscular organ with many blood vessels; it has 2 parts—the shaft (the main part) and the head (or tip). Sexual stimulation (getting excited) causes the penis to get erect (hard), and ejaculation (“cumming”) releases a milky fluid containing sperm.

- The **scrotum** is a thick skin sac (pouch) under the penis that holds the epididymis and testicles and protects them.

- The **testicles** (testes) are 2 oval-shaped glands inside the scrotum that make sperm and testosterone (the male hormone).

- The **epididymis** is a tube next to each testicle where sperm are stored.

- The **vas deferens** is a firm, muscular tube (the size of a piece of spaghetti) that carries the sperm from the epididymis to the urethra.

- The **seminal vesicles** are 2 glands that make fluid to feed sperm (they are above the prostate gland and connected with the vas deferens).

- The **bladder** is a sac that stores urine/pee until it moves to the urethra.

- The **prostate gland** is a small gland (about one and one-half inches wide) that surrounds the urethra and makes some of the fluid in semen.

- The **urethra** is a thin tube that carries urine/pee and carries semen out of the penis.
When puberty starts, boys begin to grow faster. Some guys have growing pains in their arms and legs. Your shoulders will broaden and you will grow stronger. Growth takes place over time, and how tall and big you will be at the end of it depends on a lot of things—but mostly it has to do with how tall and big the other people in your family are.

- **Acne** (pimples)
- **Facial hair**
- **Voice deepens**
- **Underarm and coarser body hair**
- **Pubic hair**
- **Growth of testes and scrotum**

- The **testicles** (balls) get bigger—later on, your penis gets bigger, too, and pubic hair grows on your scrotum and above your penis.
- Your **voice** gets deeper; it may “crack” occasionally along the way, but that will pass.
- **Facial hair** grows eventually, but when this happens is different for each person. Body hair will get thicker, too.
- You **sweat** more under your arms; you may smell different, or the smell may be stronger.
- Some guys develop swelling underneath their nipples, which can look like tiny breasts, but that is probably temporary. It happens to 2 out of 3 guys, and can last for a few years.
- You get **pimples** (acne); this happens to most people.
Q. What is an erection (hard-on)?
A. The penis hardens (grows in size and shape) when the sponge-like tissue inside it fills up with blood.

Q. What is ejaculation (cumming)?
A. This is when semen is released through the urethra at the tip of the penis during sex or masturbation; it first happens during puberty.

Q. What is semen (man juice)?
A. Semen is a mixture of sperm, prostatic fluid (from the prostate gland), and nutrients that squirt out from the urethra/pee hole during ejaculation.

Q. Can I urinate/pee and ejaculate at the same time?
A. No.

Q. What are wet dreams?
A. Boys and men regularly have erections during sleep, and sometimes they ejaculate, which is called a “nocturnal emission” or a “wet dream.” Wet dreams are healthy.

Q. What is masturbation?
A. Masturbation is when a person strokes or touches their genitals for sexual pleasure and satisfaction. It is not harmful.

Q. Do wet dreams or masturbation “waste” sperm?
A. No, the testes are constantly making new sperm.

Q. What should I do if I want to play sex and the girl says “no?”
A. Respect the girl and do not pressure her. Your hard-on will pass.

Q. If I play sex with a girl, how can I prevent pregnancy and infection?
A. Always use a latex condom.
TIPS ON MALE CONDOM USE

- Always use a condom if you play sex.
- Check the expiration date on the package.
- Make sure that the package is not torn.
- Never reuse a condom.
- Never wear 2 condoms at once ("double bagging").
- Remove the condom right after sex and put it in the pit latrine or burn it.

FACTS ABOUT ERECTIONS (HARD-ONS)

Erections can...

- Happen any time
- Happen when sexually excited
- Go away on their own after a few minutes
- Go away after ejaculation
- Happen a lot or a little

Unless you feel pain with a hard-on, don’t worry about how many!
MALE CONDOM: BEFORE SEX

1. Carefully open the package so the condom does not tear. (Do not use teeth or a sharp object to open the package.)

2. Do not unroll the condom before putting it on. If you are not circumcised, pull back the foreskin. Put the condom on the end of the hard penis.
   Note: If the condom is initially placed on the penis backwards, do not turn it around. Throw it away and start a new one.

3. Pinching the tip of the condom to squeeze out the air, roll on the condom until it reaches the base of the penis.
MALE CONDOM: AFTER SEX

1. After ejaculation, hold onto the condom at the base of the penis. Keeping the condom on, pull the penis out before it gets soft.

2. Slide the condom off without spilling the liquid (semen) inside. Take the used condom and throw it in the pit latrine or burn it.

4. Check to make sure there is space at the tip and that the condom is not broken. With the condom on, insert the penis for sex.
A. Check the expiration date on the package. Rub the outside of the pouch to be sure that the lubrication is spread evenly inside.

B. Look for the arrow at the tear notch on the upper right, and then open the package carefully. Do not use teeth or a sharp object to open the package.

C. Take out the female condom.

A. Relax and get into a comfortable position—standing with one foot on a chair, lying down, or squatting.

B. Squeeze together the sides of the thick inner ring at the closed end of the condom, spread the lips of your vagina, and slide the female condom in.

C. Push in the inner ring as far as it can go, up to your cervix. Make sure it's not twisted.

D. Pull out your finger and let the thin outer ring hang about an inch outside the vagina.
FEMALE CONDOM: AFTER SEX

A. After sex, to remove the female condom, squeeze and twist the outer ring (the part that’s hanging out) to keep semen inside the pouch.

B. Gently pull the female condom out of your vagina, being careful not to spill any semen.

C. Burn it or put it in the pit latrine.

A. Guide your partner’s penis into the opening of the condom, making sure that it doesn’t slip between the condom and your vaginal walls.

B. The female condom may move around during sex. Movement of the outer ring from side to side is normal.

C. If you feel the female condom slipping out of your vagina or feel the outer ring being pushed into your vagina, STOP, remove the female condom, and insert a new one.
**GIRLS’ AND BOYS’ PHYSICAL CHANGES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGES</th>
<th>WHAT YOU CAN DO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acne/pimples <em>(girls and boys)</em></td>
<td>• Eat a balanced diet. &lt;br&gt;• Get some exercise every day. &lt;br&gt;• Drink plenty of water. &lt;br&gt;• Wash your face and keep it dry (avoid using oily Vaseline).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underarm odor <em>(girls and boys)</em></td>
<td>• Wash regularly. &lt;br&gt;• Change your clothes regularly. &lt;br&gt;• Ask a parent to help you choose a deodorant, or use baby powder.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing breasts <em>(girls)</em></td>
<td>• Some girls find it more comfortable to wear a bra as their breasts get bigger. Ask a parent to help you find a bra that is right for you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period <em>(girls)</em></td>
<td>• Be prepared with a pad wherever you think you will need one, in school or anywhere. Keep one in your bag or purse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling pain and discomfort during your period <em>(girls)</em></td>
<td>• Exercise, like walking or stretching, can help to relieve muscle cramps. &lt;br&gt;• Drink plenty of water. &lt;br&gt;• Avoid salty foods before you get your period. &lt;br&gt;• Fill a plastic bottle with warm water and place it on your lower stomach or back to help relieve muscle aches. &lt;br&gt;• Take a warm bath. &lt;br&gt;• Ask your parent, teacher, older women, or the school nurse for advice on taking a pain reliever like Brufen or Panadol.</td>
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<td>Erections (boys)</td>
<td>• Erections can be unpredictable. Erections may or may not be connected to sexual thoughts. Your body is getting used to new hormones—it’s normal.</td>
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<td>• You may think everyone can notice, but it’s more likely that they cannot.</td>
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<td>• Erections can go away quickly on their own.</td>
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<td>• Most of your peers are experiencing the same thing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Talking about your feelings with a friend, older brother, teacher, older men, or a parent may make you feel better.</td>
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<td>Wet dreams (boys)</td>
<td>• Wet dreams are normal during puberty and adulthood.</td>
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<td>• If it makes you feel better, you can tell your parents that you prefer to change and wash your own bedsheets.</td>
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<td>Increased attention to physical appearance</td>
<td>• Part of looking good is being healthy and clean and feeling strong.</td>
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<td>• Eat a balanced diet, get regular exercise, bathe, and wash your hair regularly.</td>
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<td>• Ask one of your parents to help you buy some fashionable clothing that you will feel comfortable wearing.</td>
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<td>Unpredictable changes in mood</td>
<td>• As your hormones change, your moods may change unpredictably.</td>
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<td>• Talking about your feelings to a friend, older brother or sister, or parent may make you feel better.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Find some ways to relax, such as listening to music, spending some time alone, or hanging out with friends.</td>
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<td>• Playing sports, dancing, or doing any exercise can be great ways to expend excess energy and make you feel good about yourself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest in romantic love</td>
<td>• Romantic interest in someone is normal. These feelings are new for youth and can sometimes feel exciting, but they also can be confusing.</td>
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<td>You can gain their trust by taking small steps towards independence.</td>
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<td>Demonstrating responsibility and honesty will help to build trust, and your parents will be more likely to let you have more independence.</td>
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<th>Desire to be accepted and liked by your peers</th>
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<td>• Self-respect and self-esteem come from being true to your values and beliefs.</td>
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<td>• Be clear about what values are important to you.</td>
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<td>• Do not do something that feels uncomfortable just to fit in with a group.</td>
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<td>• Use assertive communication to tell your peers what you are willing and not willing to do.</td>
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WHAT ARE SEX, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY?

• “Sex” is the biological way in which people are born, either male or female and is based on their sex organs (penis or vagina). Examples of sex differences are: females give birth to babies and males produce sperm.

• “Gender,” unlike sex, refers to society’s expectations about how you are supposed to act, based on your sex. Gender roles are learned, and gender attitudes can change over time. Gender has to do with how you express yourself. For example, girls are expected to be gentle, and boys are expected to be strong. But the truth is—both girls and boys can be gentle and can be strong!

• “Sexuality” is not only about sex—it is about our bodies, feelings, thoughts, behavior, and desires. It is a part of how people express being feminine and masculine. It is about ourselves and our relations with others as sexual beings—about the way we dress, walk and talk, dance, and express our sexual feelings.

• You can enjoy feeling and expressing sexuality in different ways throughout your life. You do not need to have the physical act of playing sex to enjoy your sexuality.

• Playing sex is a normal, healthy, natural, and pleasurable part of life. It is natural to have sexual feelings and curiosities and to explore these. (And it is also normal to not feel any sexual feelings or interests until you are older.) Playing sex has positive physical and emotional consequences, when the time is right. Saying NO to playing sex is also normal. It is your choice.
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THEREFORE YOUTH RIGHTS!

IT’S YOUR BODY! KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Sexual rights are the rights of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence, to:

- Access sexual and reproductive health services (to seek, receive, and give information related to sexuality)
- Receive sexuality education
- Have their body respected
- Experience gender equality
- Choose their partner
- Decide to be sexually active or not
- Pursue a satisfying, safe, and pleasurable sexual life
Take Charge of Yourself

Puberty and growing up can be a confusing time, especially when you are thinking of your hopes and dreams and how to make them happen.

It’s your right to dream and follow those dreams. By imagining your future, working hard, staying in school, and taking care of yourself, you’ll be on your way.

Not becoming pregnant (or not causing a pregnancy) before you are ready is one way to increase your chances of achieving your dreams and goals.
Be kind, caring, and respectful toward friends, family, and elders.

Be an assertive communicator and a good listener—speak up to express your emotions constructively.

Delay/abstain from sexual activities until you and your partner are both ready.

If you play sex, use condoms regularly and remain faithful to one romantic partner.

Get tested for STIs/HIV regularly.

Speak out in favor of equality between girls and boys.

Challenge yourself and others to change unhealthy behavior (like being bossy, pushy, argumentative, or mean, cursing, smoking, and drinking alcohol).

Treat others the way that you want to be treated; set a good example by the way you act.
You are responsible for your body and actions. Be yourself—protect and respect yourself and others! The choices and decisions you make belong to you.

Everyone needs support, no matter how independent they feel. Support is a great thing to give and receive. Trusted adults and peer educators are ready to help you if you have questions about your body, mind, and spirit.
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