

Created in collaboration with the Lewis University College of Nursing
for the Diocese of Joliet Family Life Committee
2011

Material reflects USCCB Guideline *Formation in Chaste Living* and
Diocese of Joliet *Plan for Age Appropriate Family Life Instruction*.

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For more information, please talk to your parents or
legal guardian, a trusted adult family member, your
school nurse, or to your family doctor. You may hear
many things from your friends or from older brothers or
sisters, but you need reliable information to address
any concerns you may have about your changing body.

YOUR CHANGING BODY



***A Catholic Booklet About Puberty
For Boys***

ATTENTION!

Dear Fifth Grader,

Congratulations on entering a new phase of growing up called "puberty." It's an exciting time in your growing up years. Know that it is natural for a young person to go through puberty - and almost everyone has questions.

This booklet is designed to help answer your questions and help you to become familiar with the outward physical changes and inner emotional changes that take place during these important years.

We hope you and your parent/guardian take the time to go through this booklet *together* so you will be prepared for and better understand how all these marvelous changes take place within your body - all as part of God's plan for you as you mature from childhood into adulthood.

You may have more questions than this booklet can answer, and that is ok, too. Just make sure you ask your parent or a trusted adult for additional information. Be patient with your body because going through puberty is different for each person. You are unique because God made you that way.

The most important thing for you to remember is that these physical and emotional changes going on within your body are natural, occur over many years, and are necessary for you to become a fully grown man.

Think of this time as a special opportunity to learn more about your body, and to experience how God designed your amazing body so that it grows up with you.

Be proud of who you are becoming. God has wonderful plans for you.

The Diocese of Joliet Family Life Committee

CONCLUSION

You are not alone in this journey. It is a good time to have someone to talk to who has gone through these changes already so they can answer any questions. This could be a parent, trusted family member, teacher, doctor, or nurse. Puberty is a long journey that should be taken one day at a time. Remember, if you do fail to do what is right, regular participation in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation can give you strength to try harder.



"... as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct; for it is written 'Be holy because I am holy.'"

1 Peter 1:15-16

Third, such touches and intimate sexual activity may result in negative consequences that could change your life. Intimate sexual activity is part of the mechanism of human reproduction and sometimes results in a pregnancy (conception of a new baby) before you are mature enough physically or emotionally. Also, you could contract diseases and infections that will not go away on their own if the other person is carrying those germs. Remember, intimate touch is something you want to save for marriage.

Growing up is a natural part of life and a part of the plan God has for you as a man. With all the changes that your body and mind will go through, you may be faced with issues that you may not know how to deal with on your own. Through this stage of growing up and beyond, it is important to always remember as a good Christian that you should put God first in your life, heart, mind, and actions. God and your family have great hopes for your future. You do not want to disappoint them. You can rely on your faith as you grow to be a loving, respect-filled Christian man.



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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to give an overview of what puberty is, the changes your body will go through, and when these changes will happen. You will also learn some tips about hygiene and more importantly about God's plan for you as you become a young man.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?"
(1 Corinthians 6:19)



"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things"
(Philippians 4:8)

Making Good Decisions

An important part of becoming a young man is making good decisions. Your body is God's gift. You should cherish it, care for it, and keep it a temple for the Holy Spirit. This means you should take care of yourself, keep your body healthy, and if you are called to the vocation of married life, wait until marriage to become sexually active.

"When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things."
(1 Corinthians 13:11)

You will want to keep yourself pure and worthy of your future wife. That includes not pleasing yourself through masturbation (rubbing or stimulating yourself), which is a sin. If you masturbate, you are focusing on sexual pleasure outside of its proper place in marriage.

You may be pressured by others to touch their private body parts (what is under a bathing suit) or to allow them to touch yours. If this happens, you should say no, leave immediately, and tell a trusted adult as soon as possible.



Intimate touches should only take place within marriage. Saving intimacy for your future wife is advisable for three reasons. First, and most importantly, your body is sacred. It was given to you by God to keep pure and holy. Keeping your body pure for the person you marry will be a special gift you save for that person. This will help ensure a positive relationship that will strengthen your marriage covenant.

Second, any kind of sexual touch outside of marriage is a sin.

Hygiene

Oil glands in the skin become more active and this can cause acne. Care of the skin through frequent washings may help. In severe cases medication may be needed. Many people will have problems with acne into adulthood. Sweating and body odors also become more noticeable at this time. You will need to shower or bathe more often, and to begin to use deodorant. Also deodorant needs to be washed away each day so it does not clog your pores.

Emotional Changes

Puberty brings many changes but all are within God's plan for you as you grow into manhood. It is part of bringing you from childhood to manhood and is for the purpose of getting you ready for marriage and a family of your own someday. You will experience new challenges, including the need to make decisions and accept responsibilities.

You may find your emotions harder to control at this time. You may occasionally "blow up" and become angry at family members and others. You may lose your temper or become aggressive more easily. This is normal. Remember when this happens that you need to stop, take a deep breath, and think before you act. You need to keep in mind that your family and others love you and want what is best for you.

It may help to remember that puberty is only a transitional stage in your physical and emotional development. The discomfort and confusion you may experience from time to time are only temporary as your body makes these essential changes. There will come a time when you will once again be "comfortable in your own skin." Try to be patient with yourself and others. Prayer may help at this time.

"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."

(2 Peter 1:3-7)

What Is Puberty?

Sooner or later, usually between the ages of nine and sixteen, every boy goes through puberty. Puberty is the period of time when outward sexual characteristics develop while internal and external sexual organs mature. During this time, a boy may notice a significant growth spurt but the timing of that spurt can vary from person to person. Along with sexual development, a wide range of emotional changes also take place. Some boys go through this period very easily and for others it can be difficult at times.

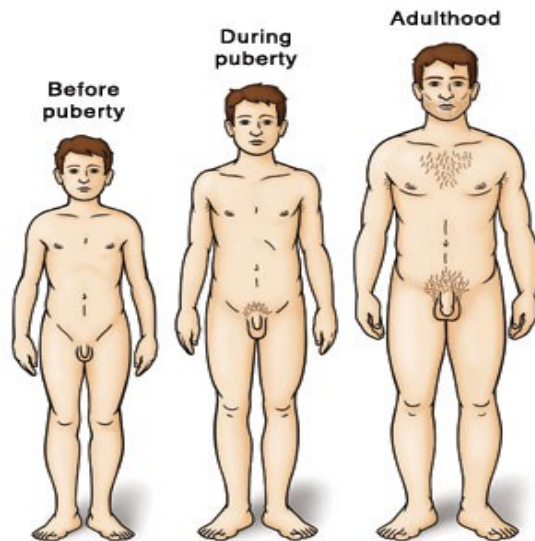
What Are These Changes?

Physical Changes

Hair usually begins to grow on various parts of the body (although it may continue to spread to other parts of the body until a young man reaches approximately age 20). There may be a sparse growth of pubic hair at the base of penis when he is about age 12. Hair is typically seen on a young man's face, underarm area, pubic area, abdomen, chest, arms, legs, and buttocks during this period. The amount and distribution of hair can vary considerably from one man to the next. The age at which you will need to begin shaving may not be the same as that of your brothers or friends.

Thinning and reddening of the scrotum, which holds the two testicles (testes) that make sperm, occurs around 12 years old. Also during this time, the body takes on a more muscular and angular shape because of the hormone testosterone. This generally begins around age 12 when testosterone causes muscle mass to increase. The greatest effect can usually be seen in the upper chest and shoulder muscles. Testosterone also causes bones to lengthen, giving young men a heavier bone structure and longer arms and legs.

Another result of increased testosterone is that vocal cords become longer and thicker and the voice becomes lower around this age. It is not unusual for the voice to change pitch abruptly or 'crack' at times. The voice usually starts to lower around 13-14 years of age and is usually finished 'changing' around age 14-15.

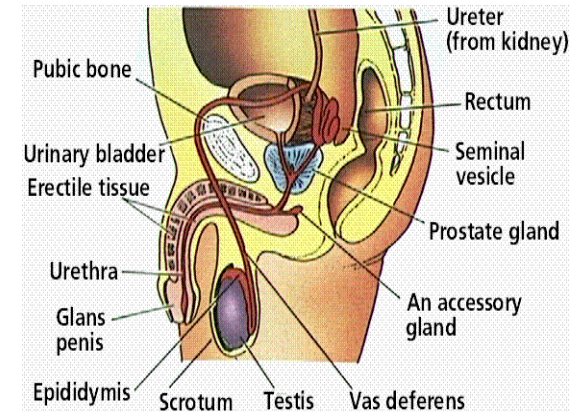


(image source: mountrittany.org)

What is a "Wet Dream?"

You may occasionally wake up to discover you have had a wet dream - the involuntary release of fluid from the penis during sleep. This is caused by sexual arousal from dreams and/or physical stimulation like rubbing against blankets, or the bed. An erection, or enlargement of the penis, may also happen while awake and for no apparent reason. This is completely normal.

Male Reproductive System



Penis: The penis is made of two parts- the shaft (the main part) and the glans (the tip).

Scrotum: The scrotum (sometimes called the scrotal sac) contains the testicles and epididymis and hangs under the penis.

Testes: The two testicles (or testes) produce sperm and the male hormone testosterone.

Epididymis: The epididymis is a tightly coiled tube where sperm are stored. From here, sperm are transported to the vas deferens.

Vas deferens: The vas deferens is a small muscular tube that transports sperm from the epididymis to the urethra.

Seminal vesicle: Located at the base of the bladder, the seminal vesicles secrete a thick fluid that nourishes the sperm.

Urethra: The urethra is the tube that carries urine and semen out of the penis.

Prostate gland: This walnut-shaped gland surrounds a portion of the urethra and produces some of the fluids in semen.