

Taking Care of My Amazing Body

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## PURPOSE

This lesson includes information and strategies for young people as they care for their bodies and navigate changes during puberty. As they go through puberty, students may have questions about hygiene and puberty products. They may need new types of clothing for their growing bodies and want to try new styles or express themselves in different ways. While many students have support at home to navigate puberty changes and access the information, products, and routines addressed in this lesson, this may not be the case for all students.

As bodies change during puberty, clothes may no longer fit and bodies can be awkward and smelly, causing peers to make comments, tease, or bully each other. We want all young people to know that changes happen at different times and in a variety of ways and it's important to understand everyone is doing their best to navigate these oftenconfusing changes. This lesson not only provides tips for health and hygiene habits, but also gives students a chance to problem-solve challenges and identify trusted people in their lives who can help them. Let them know that you (and other identified school staff) are available to answer questions and help them with the health and wellness information in this lesson.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this Taking Care of My Amazing Body lesson, students will:

- 1. Identify hygiene, health, and personal products people may use during puberty.
- 2. Apply information about puberty and hygiene products to situations that may come up as they grow and change.
- 3. Create a plan for maintaining their personal health and hygiene during the changes of puberty, including identifying trusted adults they can talk to as they navigate puberty changes.

Activities N	/linutes	Materials and Preparation Checklist
A Introduction	5	<ul> <li>Whiteboard or chart paper and markers</li> <li>Slips of paper or index cards to hand out to students for anonymous questions or exit tickets.</li> <li>Prepare answers to anonymous questions received.</li> </ul>
B Puberty Picture Cards	30	<ul> <li>Copy and cut the Puberty Picture Cards for small groups.</li> <li>If using, download the slide deck of Puberty Picture Cards here: <u>bit.ly/3zPP9mY</u></li> </ul>
C Navigating the Changes of Puberty	15	□ Make copies and cut the Puberty Scenarios for small groups to discuss.
D Making a Plan	10	Make copies of the My Changing Body, My Plan handout, one for each student.

## **LESSON SUMMARY**

## **OPTIONAL VIDEOS FOR THIS LESSON**

You may wish to introduce or supplement this lesson by using one of the videos below from Amaze.org.

Taking Care of Your Body During Puberty (2:46 minutes) shares how youth can take care of their bodies during puberty, a time when their hormones are quickly changing, causing them to experience some new physical changes such as body odor, acne, and hair growth.

<u>Body Care Basics: Puberty</u> (2:12 minutes) covers skin care routines, hygiene tips, and the physical changes of puberty. It includes information on how to address sweating and body odor, shaving body hair, cleaning sheets after a wet dream, using menstrual products, and talking to adults they trust.

<u>Period Hygiene: Tampons, Pads and Menstrual Cups</u> (2:10 minutes) describes the different menstrual products, how to use them, how often they need to be changed, and how to insert and apply each type of product.





Before beginning the lesson, pass out slips of paper or index cards to students. Remind them that they can ask questions during class, or if they prefer not to ask their questions aloud, they can write an anonymous question. Collect cards from all students at the end of class. If you have time, respond to any anonymous questions received from the previous lesson.

Start this lesson by brainstorming with your students what they know or remember about puberty.

Say,

## Let's review. What do you already know about puberty?

Possible answers:

- Students may mention the more obvious physical changes, such as getting periods, getting taller, growing hair, etc.
- Remind them that puberty changes can also include emotional and social changes.

#### Say,

Remember that puberty is when a person's body begins to develop and change as they move from being a kid to an adult. During the changes of puberty, it's important to understand how to take care of your bodies as they grow and change.

Hygiene includes the routine practices we do to keep our bodies clean, stay healthy, and avoid illness. What are some ways we practice hygiene?

Possible answers:

• brushing teeth, washing hands, taking regular showers or baths, eating healthy foods, exercising, keeping our clothes clean, etc.





This activity will help students learn about different products, healthy practices and routines, and ways to express themselves and feel more comfortable during changes they may go through during puberty.

Say,

As you grow and change, you will have the important responsibility of taking care of your own body. We are going to learn about products you can use to stay clean and be healthy. We will also talk about some products that you may use as an individual to express yourself and manage the changes your body goes through during puberty. Not everyone will use everything shown on the cards, and some people may already be using some of the products.

## DIRECTIONS

- 1. Divide the class into small groups and provide each group with a set of Puberty Picture Cards.
- 2. Provide the following instructions and allow 10 15 minutes for students to discuss the cards together. Provide the following instructions.
  - Your group has a set of cards with images of things people may use during puberty.
  - Identify the images on each card and what they are used for. It's okay if you don't know what all of the images are we'll go over them together.
  - For each card, discuss how the images on the cards can be helpful for someone during puberty.
- 3. Bring the students back together as a large group. You can use the slides of the Puberty Picture Cards found here: <u>bit.ly/3zPP9mY</u> or hold up each card one at a time.
- 4. Use the Puberty Picture Card Educator Key for information related to the items on each card. You can share information that you think is most helpful for your students or for answering questions.
- 5. Describe and discuss each of the picture cards or slides. If you have sample puberty products, show them to your students by passing them around or by explaining how they are used.

## DEBRIEF

Use the following questions to debrief the activity.

- What did you think of all those products that can be useful during puberty?
- Was there anything that you thought was missing?

## **SUMMARIZE**

Share these key points when summarizing the activity.

- Not everyone uses all the products on the cards. We are talking about these as options that you or someone you know may decide to use now or in the future.
- As you grow and go through puberty, it is important to know how to help your body stay healthy. Reach out to trusted adults to help you. Remember, they went through puberty too!



ACTIVITY C: NAVIGATING THE CHANGES OF PUBERTY



This activity gives students a chance to reflect on how the puberty products you discussed are helpful in specific situations.

Say,

Now that we have talked about these different health and hygiene products, we will look at some common challenges people your age may experience and the puberty products that might be helpful.

## DIRECTIONS

- 1. Divide the class into small groups and give each group one Puberty Scenario to read and discuss together.
- 2. Provide students with the following directions.
  - Your group will read the Puberty Scenario you were given and discuss together advice you could give to support the person in the scenario.
  - Identify where they could go for help or support and have them think about having more than one option as backup.
- 3. Give students about 5 minutes to discuss and answer the questions.
- 4. Have each group share with the class their scenario and how they responded to the questions.
- 5. Use the debrief questions to process the activity as a large group.

## DEBRIEF

Debrief the activity by asking the following questions.

- Did these situations and your advice seem realistic for people your age?
- What are some of the challenges that may come up when getting support?

Possible answers:

- May feel embarrassment or nervous.
- Not sure who is the best person to talk to.
- Not knowing how to start the conversation.
- How could you overcome those challenges?

Possible answers:

- Thinking about or writing down possible situations, solutions, and ways to start conversations.
- Identifying in advance who you might go to for support if you are in a difficult situation.

## SUMMARIZE

Share the following points to summarize the activity.

- People change at different times and in different ways. Be proud of your differences and be respectful of the changes that others are going through.
- If you have questions or are concerned about the changes you are going through, reach out and tal
- It's important to choose what feels right for you. What others think or expect of you may not always be how you want to express yourself.
- Speak up and tell someone if you feel uncomfortable with the comments or actions of others. It is better to let a trusted adult know than to let the problem continue.





In this activity, students brainstorm ways to start conversations with parents, guardians, and trusted adults in their life. Using the My Changing Body, My Plan handout, each student will apply this information for handling common situations that can occur during puberty. Some young people may feel comfortable getting help and asking questions. Others may be embarrassed and not know how to begin the conversation, which may prevent them from getting the support they need.

Say,

So far, we've learned about ways to address challenges that people may experience during puberty. Now we'll talk about ways to start a conversation with people who can support you. After that, you'll come up with a plan for common situations that can happen during puberty.

Remember the personal trust team you created for yourself? Why did we build this trust team?

Possible answers:

• To identify people we can go to with questions, for information, and to get support.

#### Would anyone like to share some of the people on your trust team?

Possible answers:

• A parent/guardian, grandparent, aunt/uncle, sibling, family friend, teacher, school nurse, or school counselor.

Say,

## Thinking about some of the people on your trust team, let's talk about some ways you could start a conversation with them.

Have students share their own ideas, and also share some of these tips and strategies that might be helpful for them.

• Start conversations about puberty the same way you might share something that happened in school, about your pet, or even what's for dinner. From there, you can move on to a conversation about puberty.

For example, say: "At school today, we learned about puberty. What was it like when you went through puberty?" Or, while watching a show, you could ask a question about something that was uncomfortable or you a have a question about.

- Ask your trusted adults who they talked to when they were going through puberty. Let them know you would like to be able to ask them questions or talk to them about challenges that come up.
- If it feels too uncomfortable to start a face-to-face conversation, write a note or send a text that you would like to talk with them. If you want, you can let them know what it is about.

#### Say,

Now that you have brainstormed ways to start conversations about puberty with trusted adults, let's talk about ways you can handle situations that may come up.

## DIRECTIONS

- 1. Pass out a copy of the My Changing Body, My Plan handout to each student. Read the instructions with them and ask students to respond to the situations and who they would go to for help and support.
- 2. If you are using the handout for a homework assignment, start with the classroom brainstorm on the previous page for tips and strategies for how to approach parents, guardians, and other trusted adults with questions they have or challenges they are facing.

## SUMMARIZE

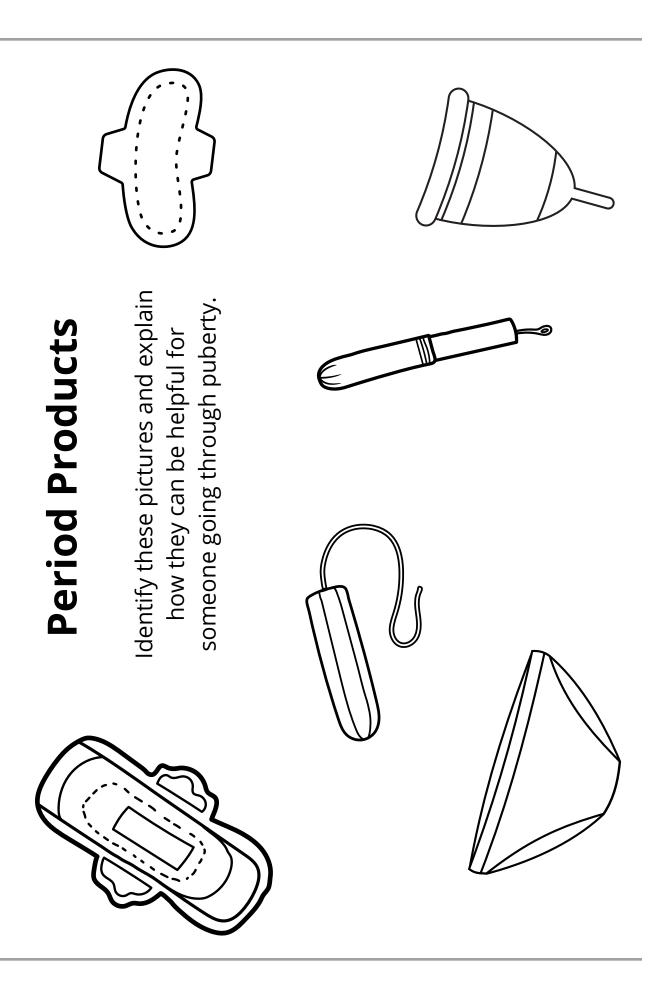
Finish the lesson by sharing the following key points.

- You have learned about puberty and hygiene products and have started to make a plan for handling situations that may come up.
- Remember that each person is experiencing puberty in different ways and at different times. Just like in the scenarios, there may be times you could help someone and there may be times when someone could help you.
- Reach out to the people who can support you in taking care of your body as you go through puberty. It is a time to be proud of your differences and to respect others. You are all in this together.

## EXIT TICKET

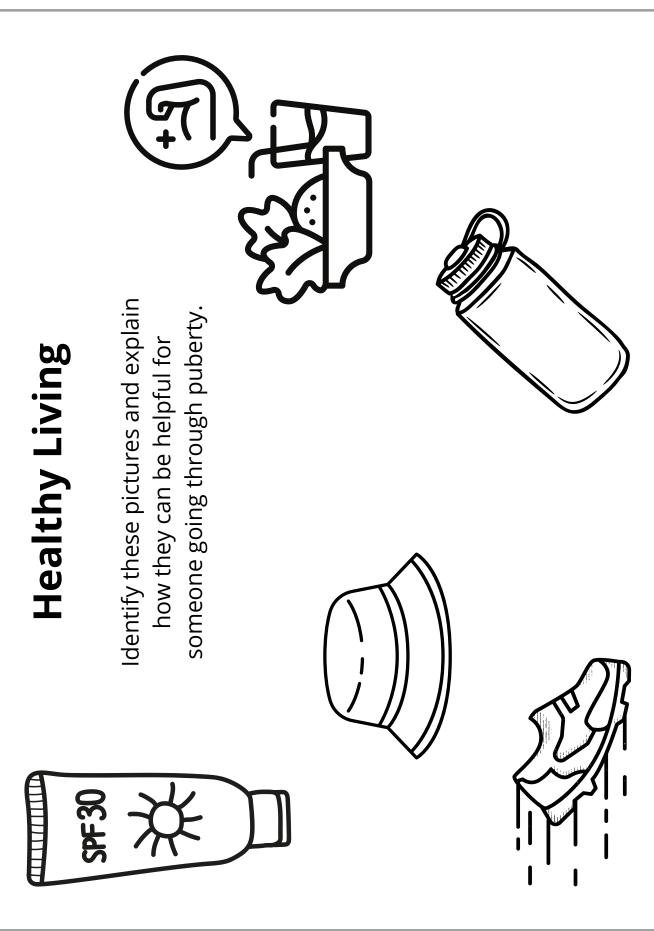
If asking students to share what they learned using an exit ticket, follow the directions below.

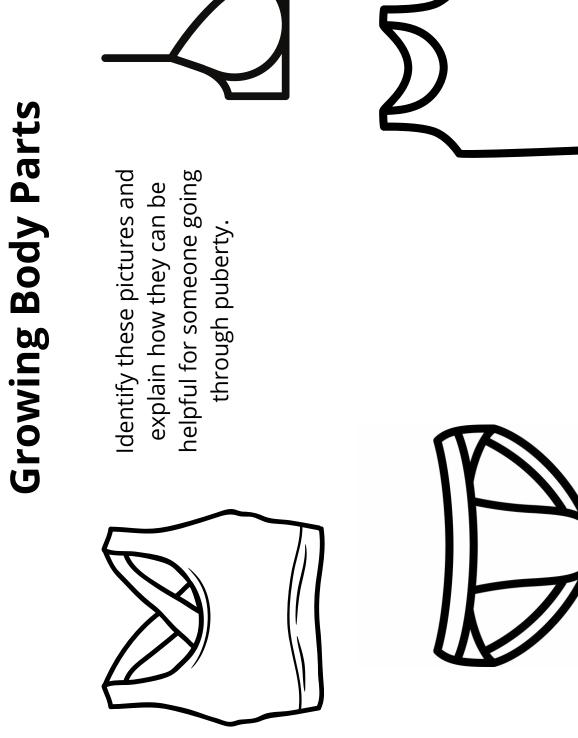
- 1. Pass out a slip of paper or index card to each student.
- 2. Ask students to respond to the following questions. You can also write these on the board.
  - What was one thing you learned about taking care of your body?
  - If you needed help getting hygiene or puberty products, who would you feel comfortable reaching out to for support?
- 3. If period products are available in your school, let students know where and how they can access them. (i.e. bathrooms, counselor's office, nurse's office, or other locations).

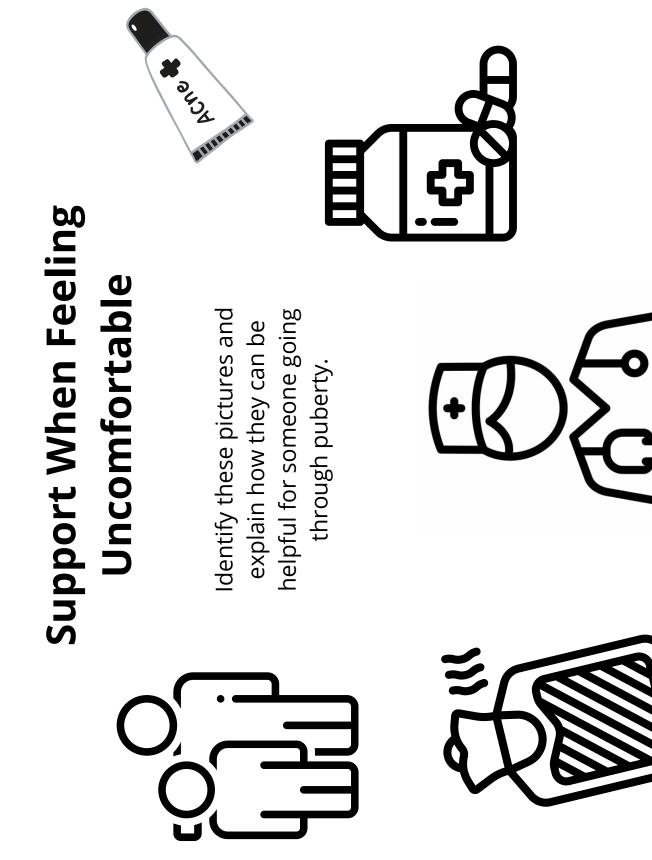




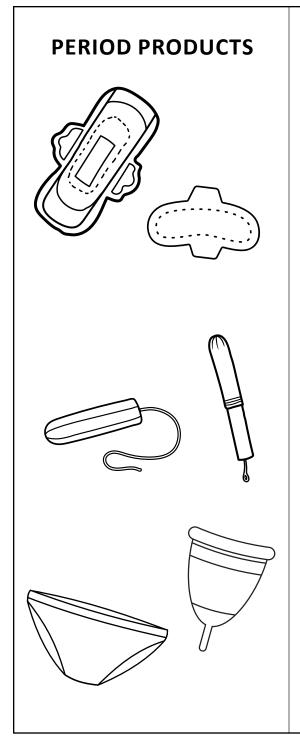








This information is a resource <u>for educators</u> to share relevant information and for responding to questions about puberty products and is not meant to be read to students in its entirety.



Most people with a uterus start having a period during puberty, anytime between elementary, middle or high school. Everyone has their own unique timeline. Period products are used to absorb blood when a person has their period. While everyone is different, bleeding commonly lasts 2-7 days. When first getting a period, the timing and frequency of periods can vary. Sometimes periods may even skip a month.

Period blood comes out of the vagina. It is helpful to know how to use and where to get period products to be prepared for when periods start. Many types of period products are available. An individual can decide which ones work best for them and their preferred products may change over time.

Trusted adults, school nurses, etc. can answer questions about periods and what products to use.

- **Pads and liners** are made of material that absorbs blood. They are placed inside the underwear and changed regularly to keep clean and avoid having blood get on clothing. Many people start with pads when they first get their period.
- **Tampons** are made of cotton that fits into the vagina to absorb period blood. Tampons can come with an applicator to insert into the vagina and a string to remove the tampon. They should be changed regularly during a period. It takes practice to insert and remove tampons, so many people use them when they are used to and more comfortable with having periods.
- Menstrual cups are placed in the vagina to collect period blood. They are emptied, cleaned with water and reused. This method is more often used by people with more experience having periods and are in a place where they can wash the cups.
- **Period underwear** is made of material that absorbs period blood and is changed every 12 hours.

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When people enter puberty, hormones in their bodies produce more sweat and oils which can lead to body odor and acne. During puberty, people often need to practice good hygiene by washing regularly.

Hygiene includes ways to keep the body clean to prevent odors, discomfort, health problems, or illness.

Some ways people take care of their hygiene include:

- Washing the body regularly with warm water and soap.
- Washing all body parts, including the face, armpits, and genitals.
- Washing hands after going to the bathroom and before eating.
- Washing hands after changing puberty products.
- Brushing teeth twice a day, in the morning and before bed.
- Putting on deodorant or antiperspirant in the morning or after a shower to reduce unpleasant body odor or underarm sweating.
- Changing socks and underwear every day and washing clothes and bedding regularly.

Not everyone has washing machines or can take baths or showers regularly. Remember that puberty is a time when bodies can be smelly, and we can't always help it. It's important to be kind to others and not tease or bully someone because of how they look or smell.

## EDUCATOR KEY

## PUBERTY PICTURE CARDS

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**GROOMING AND WAYS** 

During puberty, bodies grow and change, including growing thicker hair on many parts of the body. Most people will grow hair in the armpits and around their genitals. Some people grow hair on their face, chest, belly, back, or butt. Some people grow thicker hair on their legs, arms, and even on their knuckles and toes. Hair growth is common and nothing to be concerned about.

Some people decide to shave or trim the new hair that grows, other people let it grow. Grooming is the process of creating a neat and tidy appearance and can be a way for people to express themselves. We want to be respectful and accepting of each person's right to express themselves in a way that is important and comfortable for them. It's not okay to tease or bully someone because of the way they express themselves.

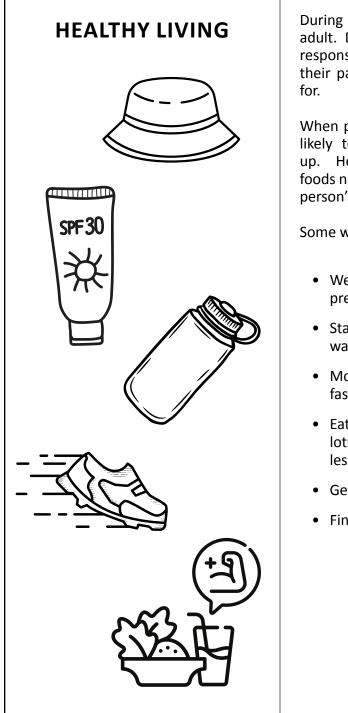
During puberty people may try different ways of dressing or expressing themselves through the way they look.

Others wear clothes or express themselves in ways that are part of their culture or religion.

Some ways people express themselves include:

- Wearing headscarves or other clothing for religious or cultural traditions.
- Styling their hair in certain ways, either through haircuts, braids, or other hairstyles.
- Shaving or trimming facial hair or body hair.
- Wearing makeup, painting fingernails or toenails, getting ears pierced, etc.

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During puberty, a person grows from a child into an adult. During this time, they start to take on more responsibility for making healthy choices that previously their parents or guardian may have been responsible for.

When people take care of their bodies, they are more likely to stay healthy and feel good as they grow up. Healthy habits like exercise and eating healthy foods not only support a person's body but it supports a person's emotional health as well.

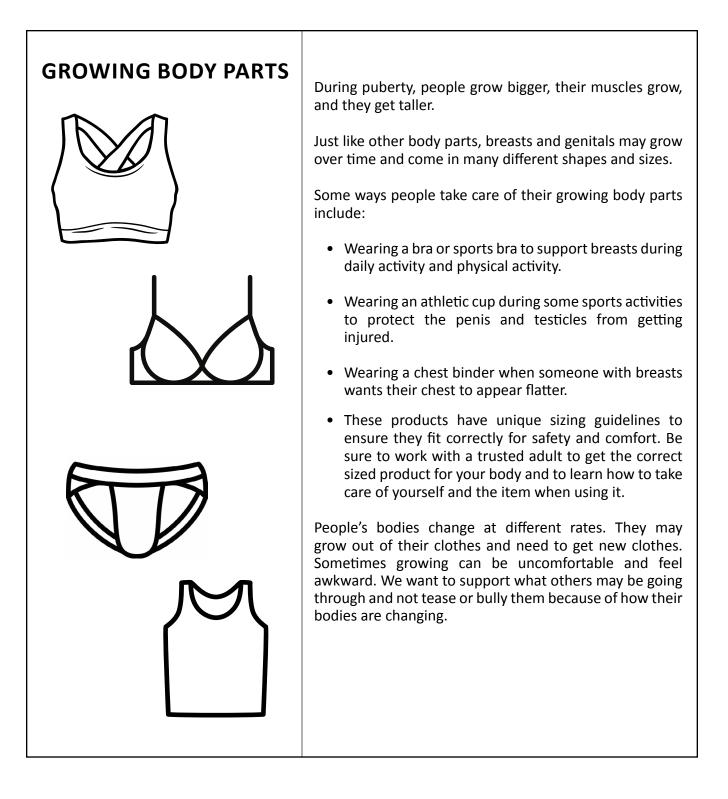
Some ways people take care of their bodies include:

- Wearing sunscreen and hats when out in the sun to prevent skin from getting sunburned.
- Staying hydrated by drinking at least 8 cups of water a day.
- Moving the body regularly to get the heart pumping faster.
- Eating healthy foods throughout the day including lots of fruits and vegetables and limiting food with less nutrients like candy, soda, etc.
- Getting plenty of rest.
- Finding or practicing ways to reduce stress.

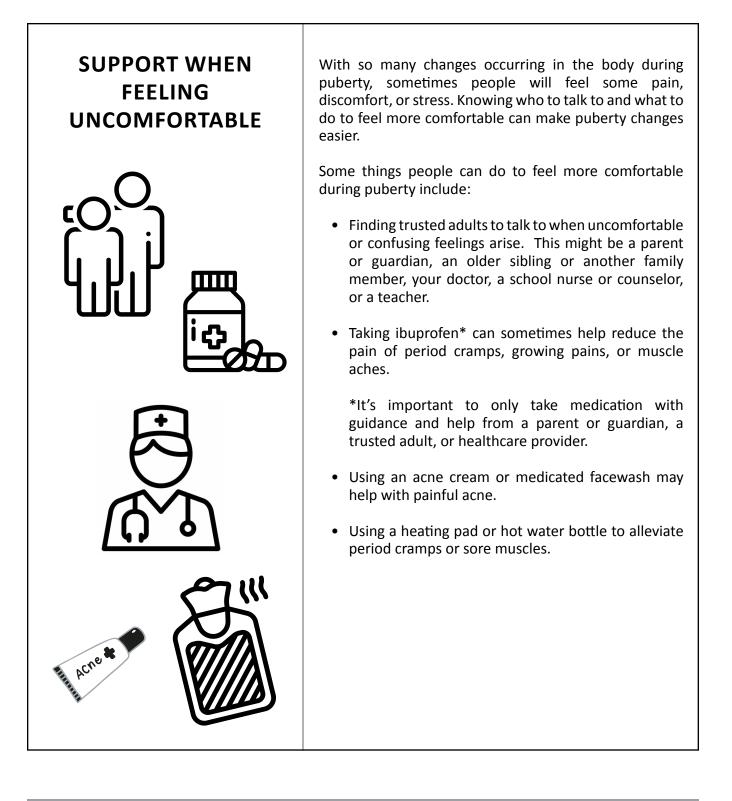
## EDUCATOR KEY

## **PUBERTY PICTURE CARDS**

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**PUBERTY SCENARIOS** 

Cut individual scenarios to hand out to pairs or groups of students.

## #1 - CLARA

Clara recently started her period while at her grandparents' house. She was too embarrassed to talk to them about it. Clara is wondering what to do if she gets her period again when she is not at home.

What could Clara do?

Who could Clara go to for support?

## #2 - AIDYN

Aidyn's breasts are starting to grow, and they are feeling embarrassed. Aidyn wants to get a bra or something to make their chest look flat like it used to. Aidyn is not sure what to do.

What could Aidyn do?

Who could Aidyn go to for support?



PUBERTY SCENARIOS

Cut individual scenarios to hand out to pairs or groups of students.

## **#3 - FRANKIE**

Frankie recently started growing hair above his upper lip and some of his friends have started calling him their furry friend. Frankie wants them to stop but isn't sure what to do.

What could Frankie do?

Who could Frankie go to for support?

## #4 - NICK

Nick really wants to paint his nails like his older sisters do. Nick has never seen boys paint their nails. He wonders if it is okay to paint his nails and what others would say if he did.

What could Nick do?

Who could Nick go to for support?

**PUBERTY SCENARIOS** 

Cut individual scenarios to hand out to pairs or groups of students.

## **#5 - SAMIRA**

Samira has noticed she is sweating a lot more than she used to, especially during PE class. She also noticed people move away from her and scrunch up their noses. She is confused and not sure what is going on.

What could Samira do?

Who could Samira go to for support?

## #6 - JOEY

Joey's friends are all starting to get taller, grow more hair, and want to do different things. Joey feels like he is the only one who hasn't started puberty and wonders if he ever will change like his friends.

What could Joey do?

Who could Joey go to for support?

## EDUCATOR KEY PUBERTY SCENARIOS

## #1 - Clara

Clara recently started her period while at her grandparents' house. She was too embarrassed to talk to them about it. Clara is wondering what to do if she gets her period again when she is not at home.

#### What could Clara do?

Possible answers:

- Clara's parents could ask the grandparents (or other places where she spends time) to have period products available in their bathroom.
- Clara could keep a pad or tampon in a bag or in her backpack that she takes with her to school and when she is spending time away from home.

#### Who could Clara go to for support?

Possible answers: Parent/guardian, older sibling, school nurse, or another trusted adult.

## #2 - Aidyn

Aidyn's breasts are starting to grow, and they are feeling embarrassed. Aidyn wants to get a bra or something to make their chest look flat like it used to. Aidyn is not sure what to do.

## What could Aidyn do?

Possible answers:

- Talk to the person who takes them shopping and ask if they can help them pick out a well-fitting bra or binder and show them how to wear them safely.
- Look for bras or binders online and then share what they are interested in with the person who takes them shopping

#### Who could Aidyn go to for support?

Possible answers: Parent/guardian, older sibling, school nurse, or another trusted adult.

## #3 - Frankie

Frankie recently started growing hair above his upper lip and some of his friends have started calling him their furry friend. Frankie wants them to stop but isn't sure what to do.

#### What could Frankie do?

Possible answers:

- Tell his friends that when they tease him and call him this name it makes him uncomfortable.
- He can ask them to stop.
- Ask another friend or trusted adult for help.
- Talk to a parent/guardian or older sibling about getting a razor and showing him how to shave safely. He can decide if shaving is something he wants to do.

#### Who could Frankie go to for support?

Possible answers: Parent/guardian, a trusted friend, older sibling, teacher, school counselor, or another trusted adult.

## EDUCATOR KEY

## **PUBERTY SCENARIOS**

## #4 - Nick

Nick really wants to paint his nails like his older sisters do. Nick has never seen boys paint their nails. He wonders if it is okay to paint his nails and what others would say if he did.

What could Nick do?

Possible answers:

- Ask his sisters if he can try using their nail polish at home. If he doesn't like it, they can help him take it off safely.
- Use a marker to color his nails (or maybe just try one or two) to see if he likes it.
- Ask the person who takes him shopping if he can buy some nail polish to try.
- First try it out on the weekend or with friends he trusts.

#### Who could Nick go to for support?

Possible answers: : Sisters, family member, parent/guardian, school counselor, friend, or another trusted adult.

## #5 - Samira

Samira has noticed she is sweating a lot more than she used to, especially during PE class. She also noticed people move away from her and scrunch up their noses. She is confused and not sure what is going on.

#### What could Samira do?

Possible answers:

- Ask a trusted classmate or friend if they know why people are moving away from her.
- Try an antiperspirant that will help her sweat less or a deodorant to reduce body odor.
- Bring a change of clothes to change into after PE.

#### Who could Samira go to for support?

Possible answers: : A friend, school counselor, PE teacher, parent/guardian, or another trusted adult.

## #6 - Joey

Joey's friends are all starting to get taller, grow more hair, and want to do different things. Joey feels like he is the only one who hasn't started puberty and wonders if he ever will change like his friends.

#### What could Joey do?

Possible answers:

- Try new activities or clothes, just because he isn't changing physically as much doesn't mean he can't find new ways to express himself.
- Write how he is feeling in a journal or talk to his parents about how he feels. Ask them when they went through puberty.

#### Who could Joey go to for support?

Possible answers: A friend, school counselor, teacher, parent/guardian, or another trusted adult.



# My Changing Body My Plan

**Instructions**: In the table below are some situations that can happen to people who are going through puberty. Read the situations and respond to the questions.

Possible Puberty Scenarios	What would you do if this situation happened to you? Who could you go to for support?
My hair is greasy and my body smells.	
Something unexpected happens in class. For example: getting a period or having a sponateous erection.	
Parts of my body are growing that make me feel uncomfortable.	
I am feeling stressed about the changes happening to my body.	