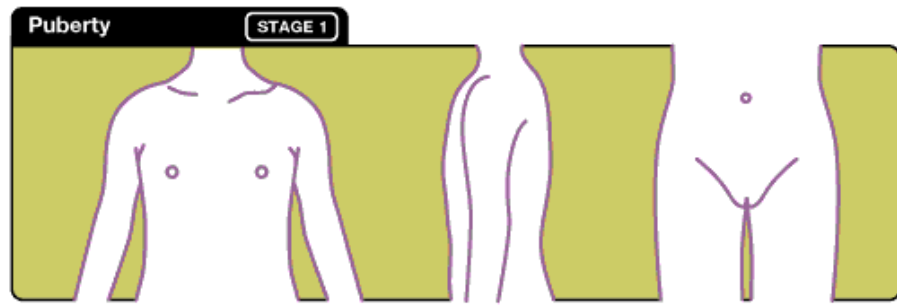


The Five Stages of Puberty

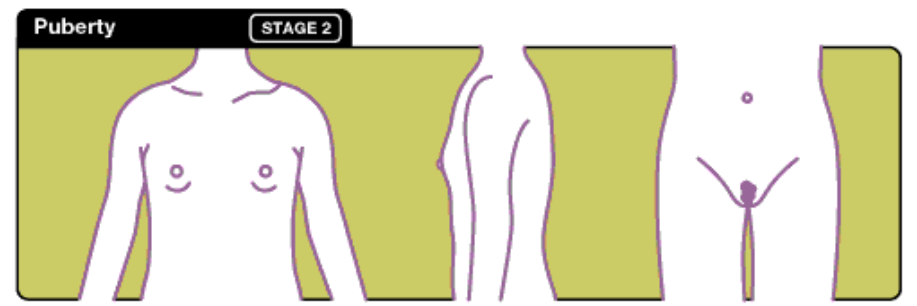
Becoming an adult is as much about developing a set of values as it is about developing physically. Whilst some of these changes may seem strange, the more we know about what is happening to us, the better we feel about growing up.

STAGE 1 Ages 8 – 11



When you look into the mirror, nothing looks any different, but inside your body your **OVARIES** are getting bigger and **HORMONES** are starting to be made.

STAGE 2 Ages 8 – 14 average age 11 – 12



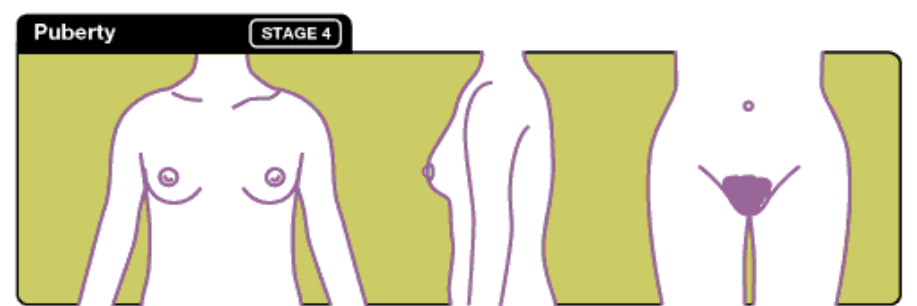
Now when you look in the mirror, you will see that your chest is no longer flat. Small bumps called **BREAST BUDS** appear. You are taller and your shape is changing because your body fat is naturally increasing, especially around the hips, which makes you look curvy. Fine, straight **PUBIC HAIR** is now appearing between your legs.

STAGE 3 Ages 9 – 15 average age 12 – 13



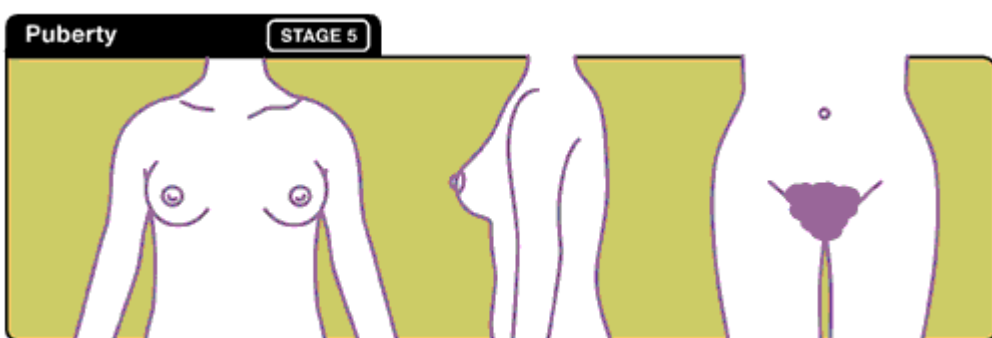
Your breasts are still growing and becoming rounder so it may be time to start wearing your first bra. You are still getting taller, and your pubic hair is becoming thicker and darker. Inside your body, your **VAGINA** is producing a natural white or clear **MUCOUS** or discharge that is made to keep your vagina clean. You may notice this when you go to the toilet and wipe yourself, or you may notice it in your pants. It is completely normal and a sign that your **PERIOD** will soon be starting. If you feel a bit sticky, **PANTY LINERS** can help you to feel more comfortable.

STAGE 4 Ages 10 – 16 average age 13 – 14



When you now look into the mirror, your breasts are quite different to when you were a child – you now have something called the **AREOLA** which is the pink area surrounding your nipples, and you may need to replace that first bra that you had. Yes, and there is a new change – underarm hair. You will need to make sure that you are washing carefully under your arms to prevent them from becoming smelly. Your hormones cause body odour and spots. It is a passing phase so keep your skin clean and leave your spots alone. Good **NUTRITION** will help to control them. Now your pubic hair has the shape of a triangle – you are nearly there. Inside you are getting close to **MENARCHE** (men-are-key) your first period, and **OVULATION** or the release of an egg may already have begun. You will start to feel **MOODY** and not understand why. Some families celebrate menarche as a time when the girl becomes a woman.

STAGE 5 Ages 12 – 19 average age 15



Now you are grown up. Physically you are an adult. Your breasts are full and rounded, your pubic hair is thick and curly, you are at your full adult height and your periods are fairly regular. Some girls may start their periods in stage 4 or later in stage 5. This is normal –