

changes During Puberty

Social Changes

Grades
4th & 5th

your social life

As you grow and mature, the ways in which you relate to others will change. The current relationships you have with your parents, friends, and those of the opposite sex will change. As you become a young woman, you will determine how and with whom you spend your time. You become more responsible for you. It's an exciting time. One in which you are becoming the person you will be as an adult.

Parents

For most of your life, your parents have been at the center of your world. They walk you to school, they plan your events, and accompany you to all your activities. As you go through puberty, this will change. Your friends become more important to you. Their opinions influence you more than your parents' for the first time ever. And although this may seem a logical thing for you, your parents may not be ready for this to happen.

Keep them in the loop. Spend time with them. They will love this. And it will make your transition through puberty easier for both you and them. Some things to think about:

- ◆ in the world. Listen to them, and share your opinions. In this way, they learn about you without you having to talk specifically about you.
 - ◆ As your parents share their opinions about things, let them know that even though you may not always follow their advice, you do value their opinions. And, guess what? They often have good advice.
 - ◆ Start conversations with your parents about things you want to talk about.
 - ◆ Talk with your parents often. They never get tired of hearing about what is going on with you. And – the more you talk, the more they GET you.
- ◆ Don't get freaked out by their constant questions – they only ask because they care about you – share with them what you feel comfortable sharing.
 - ◆ Talk to your parents about events going on



- ◆ Tell them about your day – everyday. And ask them about theirs.
- ◆ Be affectionate with your parents. Hug them and let them hug you. It'll go a long way!
- ◆ Just as you want your parents to respect your privacy, respect theirs.
- ◆ Let your parents know you need privacy. You may need more time to yourself than you used to. Remind them of this gently.
- ◆ Don't fight over every little thing. Be willing to compromise. Pick your battles and only get into it when it really matters to you.
- ◆ If your parents do things that embarrass you, let them know. They may not even realize what they are doing. They may not know what issues you are sensitive to.
- ◆ Let your parents know that you want to be honest with them. But, you need to know that they will be honest with you in return and not make you feel judged if you share your failures with them.
- ◆ Go to your parents with difficult questions. It may be hard for both of you. But they have probably dealt with the issues you are struggling with and may have some words of wisdom to share.

In the end, remember you parents love you. So although your relationship will change, and change and change again, they will always care about you. Allow them into your life. You won't be disappointed.

Friends

As stated above, your friends become more and more important as you mature. They become the ones you turn to when you are happy, sad, or in need of someone to have fun or just talk with. Although this is something new, it is normal.

Along with this, your childhood friendships may change. As you begin to depend on your friends more, you will find that those friends you've had

since preschool – those friends that your parents chose for you – or just happened to live next door – may not be the ones you'd have chosen if it was up to you. You will begin to notice, as you go through puberty, that you want friends with similar interests as you, or that participate in the same activities, or come from families who share similar values.

The thing is, it might not only be you changing friends. Some of your friends may also be moving on. This can be hard to take. You have to remember, just as you are growing and maturing, so are those around you.

SEXUAL ATTRACTION

During adolescence you will start to recognize romantic feelings. This type of love is different from what you feel for your parents, your siblings, or even your best friend. And most teens will feel it at some point or another. It is a natural and normal part of growing up.

New romantic and sexual attraction to others can be exciting – and sometimes confusing. Love is a powerful emotion. It can bowl you over even when you're not sure what it is.

You may begin to feel an attraction to someone. This physical interest you may have for someone else is the reason you want to hold hands or kiss them. It is also the reason you may get nervous, flushed, or get butterflies when you are near someone you are attracted to.

Many relationships grow out of initial attraction – like a crush. But they develop because you have trust, respect and a good friendship.

Although you may not be ready for this quite yet, be aware that if you do, it is totally normal.



(Optional Source Material)

SEXUAL ATTRACTION/ ORIENTATION

Adolescence can bring to the forefront some pretty intense sexual feelings and attractions. Don't be upset or disturbed if they are not what you expected you'd feel, or what someone else told you you would. This can be very confusing for teens that find themselves attracted to or having sexual feelings for someone of the same gender. You might think to yourself, "Does this mean I'm gay?"

As people begin to have sexual feelings for the first time, thoughts about both your own, as well as the opposite sex are very common. These new feelings and attractions do not necessarily mean that you fit into any one sexual orientation mold. Neither will it if you decide to act upon some of your feelings. Experimentation while discovering your own newfound sexuality does not decide if you are gay or straight. It is just that, experimentation.

SEX

Everywhere you look, someone is saying something different about sex. When most people talk about sex they are referring to vaginal intercourse (when a man inserts his penis into a woman's vagina). But for many people, that is too narrow a definition for such a complex issue. A better way to define sex is anything that arouses or satisfies us in a sexual way. Because we are all so different, with varied experiences and feeling, definitions of what sex is or isn't also varies widely.

The age at which a person is ready to become sexually active varies depending on emotional maturity, values, religious beliefs, and a whole host of other things that go into making this important decision. You may experience a lot of pressures to be sexual and the attitudes you form now will be important in helping you deal with these pressures.

It's a natural part of life to have romantic or sexual feelings. As people pass from childhood, through

adolescence, to adulthood, their feelings develop and change. During adolescence, sexual feelings are awakened in new ways due to the hormonal development during puberty. You may notice physical attraction to others for the first time.

Having sex is a very adult and mature thing to do. It can bring on a lot of things that you aren't prepared to handle, like getting pregnant and having a child, or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Be careful and safe. You need to be mature enough to understand about your risks and prevention of STIs and have the knowledge about how to protect yourself from pregnancy. All sexually active women need to have regular visits to a doctor to help keep them healthy.



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