

<b>Course:</b> Personal Wellness	<b>Grade:</b> 4/5
<b>Unit:</b> 1	<b>Lesson Title:</b> Puberty
<b>Curriculum Connections</b>	
<b>General Outcomes:</b> 1) Students will make responsible and informed choices to promote and maintain a healthy lifestyle.	<b>Specific Outcomes:</b> Grade 4: Identify changes that occur during puberty; Grade 5: Explain how the body changes during puberty;
<b>Facts for Educators</b>	
<p>- Gender-inclusive education ensures that all students feel recognized and included when discussing the changes that arise during puberty. Transgender and gender-diverse students are particularly at risk of negative outcomes (suicide, self-harm, depression, etc) if they are made invisible, stigmatized or discriminated against. <a href="https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/new-guide-for-gender-inclusive-puberty-and-health-education">https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/new-guide-for-gender-inclusive-puberty-and-health-education</a></p> <p>- Puberty can be an especially distressing time for transgender and gender-diverse students as the effects of virilization can be challenging to reverse in adulthood. It's important to be aware of resources available within the school and community that can provide support to transgender and gender-diverse students and their families. <a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-puberty-transgender-idUSKBN1ZM311">https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-puberty-transgender-idUSKBN1ZM311</a></p> <p>- Some students may be put on puberty blockers by their physician to delay the physiological changes that come with puberty. If the student stops taking the puberty-blockers, their puberty will continue as normal. After years on puberty blockers, students and their families may decide to pursue hormone replacement therapy and once a student reaches maturity, gender-affirming surgery occur. <a href="https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gender-dysphoria/in-depth/pubertal-blockers/art-20459075">https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gender-dysphoria/in-depth/pubertal-blockers/art-20459075</a></p> <p>- It's important to note that not all transgender or gender-diverse students will want drug, hormone or surgical intervention. In the same way that cisgender students are not questioned about their</p>	

private medical information, it is important to be sensitive about this with transgender and gender diverse students as well. <https://childmind.org/article/transgender-teens-gender-dysphoria/>

- It's estimated about 1.7% of the population is intersex, which is a term to describe people whose unique hormonal, chromosomal, internal organ and anatomical features fall outside those who are unambiguously male or female. <https://interactadvocates.org/faq/>

- Gender Spectrum offer 5 principles for educators to make conversations about puberty inclusive:

1. Provide a foundation of gender literacy: Help students understand between their bodies, how they express their gender and their gender identity.
2. Distinguish patterns from rules: Help students understand that while there may be patterns to what are typical and bodies for one type of person, these patterns are not absolute and there are many exceptions.
3. Emphasize physiology rather than genders: Help students understand that our bodies and our gender are different things, so when we talk about puberty we will focus on different parts of the body.
4. Describe many pathways to adult bodies: Help students understand that everyone's experience of puberty and the outcome for their bodies will be different. E.g. some people who experience masculinization may have sparse facial hair, while some people who experience feminization could end up with facial hair.
5. Describe many pathways to families: Ensure that puberty conversation don't exclude families that are not created through intercourse E.g. adopted families, foster families, same-sex families, chosen families, etc.

<https://tinyurl.com/33jn287j> -- full document

## Inclusivity for 2SLGBTQ+ students

- Discussions about puberty often conflate biological sex with gender.

- **DISRUPT:** Avoid focusing on gender binaries when talking about the changes of puberty.
  - **THIS:** Everyone has both estradiol and testosterone. Depending on your mix of these hormones, you will go through different changes during puberty. Some of you will grow facial hair, some will get deeper voices, and some folks will grow breasts. Let's look at which hormones are responsible for which changes.
  - **NOT THIS:** All girls will grow breasts when they reach puberty, and all boys will get deeper voices.

- Mentions of burgeoning sexual interest and desire often assume heteronormative attraction and excludes asexuality.

- **DISRUPT:** Avoid presuming and reinforcing heterosexual attraction as what is "normal"

- **THIS:** When people start going through puberty they may start having romantic and sexual feelings toward other people. Not everyone has the same kinds of feelings, or likes people the same ways and this is ok!
  - **NOT THIS:** When boys enter puberty they begin to feel sexual attraction toward girls and vice-versa.
- Discussions around puberty focus on opposite-sex sexual reproduction.
- **DISRUPT:** Avoid classifying reproduction accomplished through sex as the “normal” way to have a family.
    - **THIS:** Puberty makes changes in our bodies that help most of us produce either the egg or the sperm needed to make a baby. Some babies are created through sex while others are made with the help of doctors, but all babies are made from one egg and sperm.
    - **NOT THIS:** Puberty makes changes to our body so that when adult men and women can make a baby through intercourse.
- Discussions about puberty often involve dividing the class into boys and girls.
- **DISRUPT:** Consider not separating students based on sex or presumed gender. Information on puberty can and should be beneficial to all students.
- The curriculum guides and other resources often have heavily gendered language
- **DISRUPT:** Ensure you are reviewing the material and lesson suggestions ahead of time to make sure that you are considering the needs of all students rather than only the cis-gender ones.
- Discussions about intersex people rarely occur despite representing almost 2% of the population. For perspective, it’s about the same percentage of the world’s population that have red hair.
- **DISRUPT:** Frame positively that variation is a natural part of the human species
    - **THIS:** Intersex people are born with unique combinations hormones, chromosomes, organs and genitals that can make their puberty different from other folks.
    - **NOT THIS:** Occasionally there is a mistake when a baby is being made that means that it is born as both a boy and a girl.

## Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCFKMxmviTk>

<https://sogieducation.org/all-educators-posts/elementary-lesson-plans>

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/things-schools-teach-puberty-parents-unteach\\_l\\_604852abc5b636ed3376e3a8](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/things-schools-teach-puberty-parents-unteach_l_604852abc5b636ed3376e3a8)

<https://theconversation.com/im-a-pediatrician-who-cares-for-transgender-kids-heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-social-support-puberty-blockers-and-other-medical-options-that-improve-lives-of-transgender-youth-157285>

<https://transstudent.org/gender/>

<https://www.vox.com/2018/10/22/18009020/transgender-children-teens-transition-detransition-puberty-blocking-medication>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/its-intersex-awareness-day-here-are-5-myths-we-need-to-shatter/>

<https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/sexual-health-education/understanding-your-role/get-prepared/using-the-lesson-plans/>

<https://gdhr.wa.gov.au/-/puberty>

## Atlantic Connections

While this lesson focuses specifically on the experience of puberty, it is important to note other ways the province is working to greater inclusivity with respect to gender diversity and equality in other areas:

- Adopting gender neutral names for official offices: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/gender-neutral-rentalsman-ombudsman-new-brunswick-1.3887239>
- Offering gender neutral washrooms in schools: <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/n-b-schools-taking-steps-to-be-more-inclusive-to-transgender-students-1.2564742>
- Offering third gender marker for birth certificates: [https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2019.05.0323.html](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2019.05.0323.html)

## Topics to Explore with students

- Reviewing the correct names for different parts of the body
- Introducing or reviewing the difference between sex, sex characteristics and gender
- Exploring ideas about gender expression and how they change between cultures and over time
- Discussing cultural or religious rituals that occur when people reach puberty (students may want to share what is relevant to them)

## Questions to ask students

- What do you know about puberty? What have you heard from your friends, family or media?

- What things about puberty that make you nervous or confused?
- Why do you think it might be important to talk about the changes that happen at puberty?
- What are some things we could say to a friend who is worried about puberty? What might be helpful?
- Who is someone trustworthy you could talk to if you are feeling embarrassed about the changes happening to your body?

### Activity suggestions

**Note:** All activities presume the educator has established classroom expectations around respectful and appropriate behaviour for the subject matter under discussion. It may be helpful to remind students of codes of conduct, supports and self-care techniques to ensure a healthy learning environment.

- <https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/permalink/resource1017> -- Call me tree
- <https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/permalink/resource827> -- Questioning gender expectations
- <https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/Gr4-LP1-Puberty-Changes-ENGLISH-FINAL.pdf> - Puberty Changes
- <https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/Gr4-LP2-Coping-Puberty-ENGLISH-FINAL.pdf> - Puberty Changes 2
- <https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/Gr5-LP1-Puberty-Review-ENGLISH-FINAL.pdf> --Review of Puberty Changes \*\* note the Kahoot! has gendered language therefore it's recommended to make a version that is more inclusive.
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