



TEACHING GUIDE

GROWING UP! FOR GIRLS

No. 9211

Recommended for Grades 4-6

This upbeat video/DVD combines music, fresh artwork, live-action photography, and a warm narrator to present basic information about female reproductive anatomy, the emotional and physical transformations of puberty, and the importance of good health and hygiene. **Growing Up! For Girls** takes a realistic look at the responsibilities of adulthood and promotes dialogue with trusted adults, promoting self-confidence as girls face the challenges of change and growth.

SCRIPT

"... and that was from the Rainmakers' new CD, just released on Polygram in Europe, but not yet here in the U.S.A. You heard it first right here on KETV."

Hi! I'm Tina Medina, and I've been working in radio and television now for several years. I really like the work. It's fun and sometimes hectic. I have to be poised and look self-assured, even when I might not feel that way.

There was a time when I was anything but self-confident. When I was a teenager, I felt clumsy and awkward. Some girls seemed to have the perfect hair and perfect figures. They were graceful and smart. They made growing up look easy. But for most people, it's a struggle. You know you're not really a kid anymore, but teenager? That sounds a little strange, doesn't it?

Becoming a teenager was a confusing time for me, and I bet it is for you too. What's happening is that your body is changing. You're growing up.

GROWING UP! FOR GIRLS

Growing up means that your body is changing.

Every woman experiences changes as she develops from a girl into a woman. Her body changes, her voice changes, and her interests change.

These changes are part of the growth process we call adolescence, and they happen gradually.

For most girls these changes start between the ages of 10 and 14. Boys develop a little later than girls, between the ages of 11 and 16.

Every girl and boy, however, has his or her own pattern or rhythm of change. These two girls are the same age, but look at how different they are in size.

You'll experience your body's changes at a pace that is right for you.

Even so, questions will come up. Sometimes you may get conflicting information; or your friends may talk about things you haven't heard before. If you feel confused or anxious, talk to someone you trust about your feelings.

You'll find that change is easier to handle when you can talk about it with close friends — including your parents, or a teacher, or an adult friend.

During adolescence your body will go through many changes, and some of those changes may occur rapidly. There will be times when you may not even feel like you. It will take some time to get used to your new body. In just one year you may grow several inches taller and gain 10 or 20 pounds without being overweight.

Your breasts will begin to develop and will become more sensitive.

The bones of your pelvis widen, and your hips will begin to round out.

You'll notice hair growing in the pubic area between your legs and also under your arms. During adolescence many girls begin to shave their legs and underarms for cosmetic reasons.

As your body changes, your voice will also change, becoming richer and fuller. Voice changes are due to the lengthening of the vocal cords as your body grows. Boys will experience more dramatic voice changes, and sometimes their voices will "crack" as their bodies settle into their rhythm of change.

Acne is another result of adolescent change. Most girls will experience outbreaks of pimples and blackheads that may show up on the face and sometimes shoulders and chest. You can help control acne by keeping your face clean. It also helps to keep your hands clean and avoid touching the pimples. And you may want to ask your parents or your doctor to recommend the best cleanser for your skin to help keep it healthy.

You may be wondering why acne seems to appear suddenly, for no reason.

Well, there is a reason. Your skin contains glands that produce oil to keep it healthy. During adolescence, those oil glands often increase their activity, producing more oil.

Sometimes the oil becomes trapped in a pore, which causes a pimple to erupt, or a blackhead.

Glands are necessary for your body to function properly, and there are different types of glands. When you get hot, your body releases water, which is called perspiration or sweat. It's a function that is controlled by sweat glands. As the perspiration evaporates, your body is cooled. So sweat glands help regulate the body's temperature.

While perspiration is a great natural air conditioner, it can cause body odor. You'll want to bathe often and wear clean clothes. Many girls start using an underarm deodorant or combination deodorant-antiperspirant during adolescence.

Many different glands provide the different substances our bodies need to function. There are oil glands, sweat glands, glands that secrete substances to help you digest your food

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... and glands that produce hormones which are secreted into the blood stream where they are carried to other organs. Hormones then stimulate various organs in the body to do certain things.

In fact, hormones are behind all the changes you experience during adolescence. But what causes the hormonal changes? Another gland — the pituitary gland.

The pituitary gland is located at the base of your brain. It produces the hormones that control how and when your body grows bigger and taller.

The pituitary also produces hormones that stimulate the reproductive glands. In girls, the reproductive glands are called ovaries. Ovaries produce estrogen and progesterone. Estrogen stimulates characteristics such as breast development and the growth of pubic hair.

The female reproductive system also includes the uterus and the vagina. The vagina is a short channel that leads from the uterus to an opening between the urethra and the anus. Your body discharges liquid waste as urine through the urethra, and solid waste as bowel movements through the anus.

The ovaries contain female sex cells, called ova or egg cells. You were born with every egg cell you will ever have, but these egg cells do not mature until your body does.

About once a month one of the ovaries releases a mature egg cell, which travels through the Fallopian tube and into the uterus. This process is called ovulation.

Your body is made up of many tiny cells — about three trillion cells, in fact. Each cell is a miniature living thing. There are skin cells, muscle cells, blood cells, brain cells, organ cells. The egg cell is the only cell large enough to be seen without a microscope.

The egg cell is the female sex cell. Sex cells produced by males are called sperm. Sperm is produced by males in sex glands called testes. While the female egg cell is no bigger than the point of a needle, it is still thousands of times bigger than a male sperm cell.

Each sex cell, the sperm and ovum, is exactly half of what is required to create a new human life. When a man's sperm and a woman's egg join, they produce a fertilized egg, which can develop and grow into a baby.

The time in life when a boy's body becomes capable of producing sperm cells and a girl's egg cells mature and become capable of being fertilized by a sperm cell is called puberty.

But keep in mind that becoming physically capable of creating a baby does not make a person ready for the responsibility of becoming a parent. Growing up is a combination of physical and emotional maturity, and in the human rhythm of change, our bodies mature much more quickly than our minds and emotions.

Although every woman will not choose to become a mother, every woman's body is designed to bear children — and all women experience the process of menstruation about once a month.

About once a month, one of the ovaries releases a mature egg. The egg passes through the Fallopian tube on its way to the uterus. If, on the way, a sperm cell joins the egg, it becomes fertilized.

During the month, the uterus has been preparing to receive a fertilized egg. Hormones from the ovaries have caused the uterus to build up a lining of blood and mucous membrane to protect and nourish the fertilized egg as it grows into a baby.

If the egg is fertilized, it will attach itself to the wall of the uterus and begin the growth process.

However, if the egg cell is not fertilized, it does not attach to the uterus wall. Instead, it continues on through the uterus, and the woman's body discharges the egg cell, along with the built-up lining of blood and mucous membrane. The discharge leaves her body through the vagina, and it is called the menstrual flow.

The menstrual flow is a normal, natural process that is part of every woman's rhythm of life. The time from one menstrual flow to the next is called the menstrual cycle.

The word menstruation comes from the Latin word for month, mensis. At first your menstrual cycle may not be regular, but you can expect to menstruate once a month, about every 26 to 32 days. The menstrual period lasts about three to seven days.

A woman will menstruate from adolescence up to about age 50. When menstruation stops, then a woman's body is no longer prepared to bear a child.

During menstruation, the flow of blood must be absorbed. Some girls and women use sanitary napkins, soft pads which attach to your underwear with self-adhesive strips. The pads are comfortable and cannot be seen through your clothing.

Tampons can also be used to absorb the flow of blood. Instead of being worn like a pad, a tampon is placed inside the vagina. Talk to your mother or another adult woman, perhaps a nurse, to help you decide whether pads or tampons are best for you.

Your personal hygiene is especially important during your menstrual period. Change your pad or tampon several times each day and bathe or shower daily. Wrap your used tampons and pads in toilet paper and place in a waste container. Restrooms often have separate containers for this purpose.

Physically, you'll probably feel fine during your period. Some girls and women experience minor abdominal cramps as the uterus prepares to discharge its lining. But cramps should not prevent you from enjoying your normal

activities. In fact, exercise usually helps decrease any discomfort from cramps. If you wear pads, you can still participate in most sports, and with tampons you're even free to go swimming.

If you feel a little down or blue or a little edgy just before or during your period, don't worry. For some women, that's simply part of the menstrual cycle.

Your journey through adolescence will be exciting although at times it may be a little rough. These changes all take time, and you have to take the time and have the patience to learn what it means to be a responsible adult woman.

As you grow and develop into a responsible woman, you gain maturity and respect, for yourself and others. You also gain knowledge and skills and abilities that will allow you to hold a job. You'll be able to earn the money you'll need to support yourself and perhaps a family one day, too. When you accept the responsibilities of taking care of yourself now, as you enter puberty, you're well along the path to womanhood.

One of those important responsibilities is to learn about the changes that are taking place or will take place in your body.

The pituitary is the gland that produces the hormones which trigger your body's growth. At puberty, hormones produced by the pituitary gland stimulate the ovaries to produce sex hormones and release mature egg cells.

The uterus, or womb, is the place where a fertilized egg develops into a baby. The egg travels from the ovary through the Fallopian tube on its way to the uterus, a process called ovulation. Ovulation takes place about once a month.

If the egg is not fertilized, it travels on through the uterus. At the same time, the inner lining of the uterus, made up of blood and mucous membrane, is discharged through the vagina.

If an egg cell is fertilized by a sperm cell, it attaches to the wall of the uterus to begin the process of growth that will result in a new human life.

Knowing how your body works is one thing, but you also need to keep it in shape. Regular exercise helps you develop endurance and build strong muscles, including that very special muscle, the heart.

Taking care of your body in a responsible manner also means eating right and avoiding junk food as much as possible. Eat healthful foods from all the food groups, including fruits, vegetables, breads and grains, meats and dairy products.

During this period of physical growth, your body needs plenty of sleep, but be sure to get up early enough in the morning to eat breakfast. It really is the most important meal of the day.

Develop good personal hygiene too. Shower or bathe daily and wear clean clothes and underwear. Wash your face thoroughly — but gently — every day.

Don't forget to brush your teeth, in the morning and at night.

Healthy bodies and healthy minds work together to help you develop into a woman. Work hard in school, study, develop good friendships that you value, think about who you are, what you value in life, what your family values. Think about what kind of woman you want to become. Think about the special rhythm of your body as it changes and grows.

No one said growing up is going to be easy. Some days it's going to be confusing or awkward, painful or embarrassing. But growth and change are a part of life, and you're not alone. Every woman, no matter who she is or where in the world she lives, goes through the very same changes. It will help to have an adult you can trust when you have questions or when you just need to talk.

Remember — growing up is about more than your body growing up and growing strong. It is also about the growth that goes on in your mind and in your heart, and it is about the expanding world of responsibilities and opportunities you are just beginning to discover.

It is about the very special way you link your body with your head and heart. Growing up is really about discovering a new you.

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VOCABULARY

abdominal cramps	ovulation
acne	ovum/ova
adolescence	pelvis
adulthood	perspiration
anus	pimple
blackhead	pituitary gland
body odor	pore
bowel movement	progesterone
cell	puberty
deodorant	pubic area
estrogen	reproductive gland
Fallopian tube	reproductive system
fertilized egg	responsibility
gland	sanitary napkin
hormone	sex cell
hygiene	sperm
menstrual cycle	sweat gland
menstrual flow	tampon
menstrual period	testes
menstruation	urethra
microscope	urine
mucous membrane	uterus
oil gland	vagina
organ	womb
ovary	

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To give information about the parts and functions of the female reproductive system.
2. To identify the physical changes that girls experience during puberty.
3. To explore the emotional issues associated with the onset of puberty.
4. To promote good health and hygiene.
5. To discuss how to take responsibility for developmental changes and the progression to adulthood.
6. To encourage a positive attitude toward change.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Invite a gynecologist to talk to your students about puberty and menstruation. Ask the doctor to bring a model of the female reproductive system. Invite a pregnant woman to talk about the changes that have taken place in her body. If these visits take place on the same day, ask the doctor to bring a stethoscope so that the students can hear the fetal heartbeat.
2. Select a variety of pictures of females of all ages, from infants to senior citizens. Ask students to arrange the pictures in order according to the estimated age of the female in each picture. Discuss the bodily clues that help in this estimation, such as height, body shape, facial features, skin texture, body hair, and so forth. Arrange these pictures in a bulletin board collage.
3. Share with students one or two embarrassing moments you experienced when you were their age. Then ask students to think of an embarrassing moment they have recently experienced that they wouldn't mind sharing with their female classmates. Ask them to write a paragraph describing the experience. Students will enjoy sharing these paragraphs, and they will see that no one is exempt from such experiences.

4. Divide students into groups of two or three students and ask each group to make a list of all the responsibilities an adult might have. Remind students to be specific! Then ask students to circle responsibilities on the list that they think they could handle now. For each responsibility on the list that they do not yet feel equipped to handle, ask the group to think of a way to prepare for it. Stress that we are each responsible for our own behavior and decisions.
5. Provide lots of magazines for students to use. Ask them to cut out as many products as possible that promote good hygiene. Discuss which products are essential and which are non-essential. How much time is involved in using each product? Assemble the pictures into a classroom collage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is puberty?
2. What are some of the typical physical changes that girls can expect to experience during puberty? Will all girls experience these changes at the same rhythm and pace?
3. It helps to talk to someone about the changes of puberty. Who are some of the people who might be good sources of information? Are classmates good sources of information?
4. What physical changes may lead to acne problems during puberty? What can be done to help control outbreaks?
5. What is the function of perspiration? What steps can be taken to avoid body odor from perspiration?
6. In girls, what are the reproductive glands called? What are female sex cells called?
7. About once a month, one of the ovaries releases a mature egg cell, which travels to the uterus. What happens if the egg cell is fertilized on the way to the uterus? What happens if the egg cell is not fertilized?
8. What are some ways to help maintain a healthy body?

NOTES

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