



Ready or Not, Here It Comes...

Sooner or later puberty will affect your child. You know that, but does your child? They might have heard about that troublesome word, but experiencing it is much different. Usually, puberty starts between the ages of 8 and 15 for girls and 11 and 17 for boys.

Signs that puberty has begun in girls:

- ⇒ breast development
- ⇒ pubic or underarm hair begins
- ⇒ rapid height growth — a growth "spurt"
- ⇒ onset of menstruation
- ⇒ pimples or acne may begin
- ⇒ "mature" body odor

Signs that puberty has begun in boys:

- ⇒ enlargement of the testicles or penis
- ⇒ pubic, underarm, or facial hair development
- ⇒ rapid height growth — a growth "spurt"
- ⇒ voice deepening
- ⇒ pimples or acne may begin
- ⇒ "mature" body odor

What can YOU do?

Give your child a simple, truthful explanation about what's happening; their bodies are maturing and preparing for adulthood. Let them know that the changes they are experiencing are absolutely normal even though it might not seem so to them.

Also be sure to watch for signs that teasing or other difficulties associated with puberty may be affecting your child's emotional development. **Common signs/changes to watch out for include:**

- ⇒ grades dropping
- ⇒ problems at school
- ⇒ loss of interest in daily activities
- ⇒ emotional ups and downs; depression

NOTE: Emotional ups and downs are part of going through puberty. The flood of hormones can cause emotional upheaval. If your child seems to be experiencing something more than the normal ebbs and flows, seek guidance from a professional.

Remember: How YOU cope with the changes they are experiencing can determine how successfully your child will cope.

