




# GIRLS CHANGE

# INTRO


This booklet is intended to answer some of the questions you may have about growing up; what will happen to your body, and what feelings will you have, as you go through puberty?

Hopefully the information you read will be helpful to you. If there is anything which sounds confusing, or you don't understand, it may be helpful to discuss it with your parents, carer, friend or teacher. Remember, every adult you know has been through puberty themselves.

Understanding what is happening can really help the way you react to the changes. The important thing is to take things at your own pace and do what feels right for you.



A person's body changes throughout life. But here we are talking about particular changes called puberty.



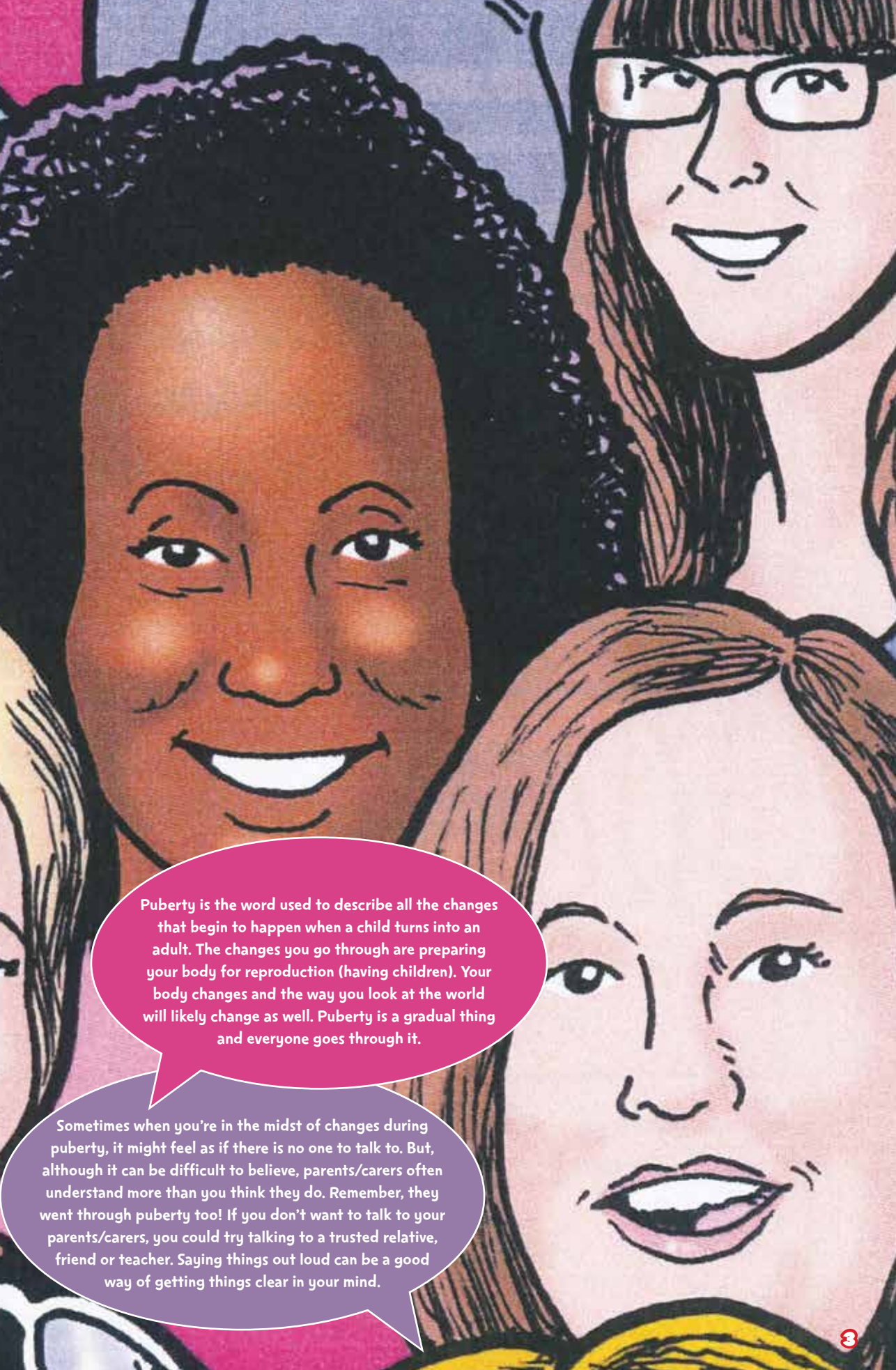
A word about words. It's good to know about your body, and it's important to know the names for the parts that you are learning about. But there are many different words, and not all of the words you use with your family or friends will be liked or understood if you use them with other people. The words used in this booklet are generally understood by most people.



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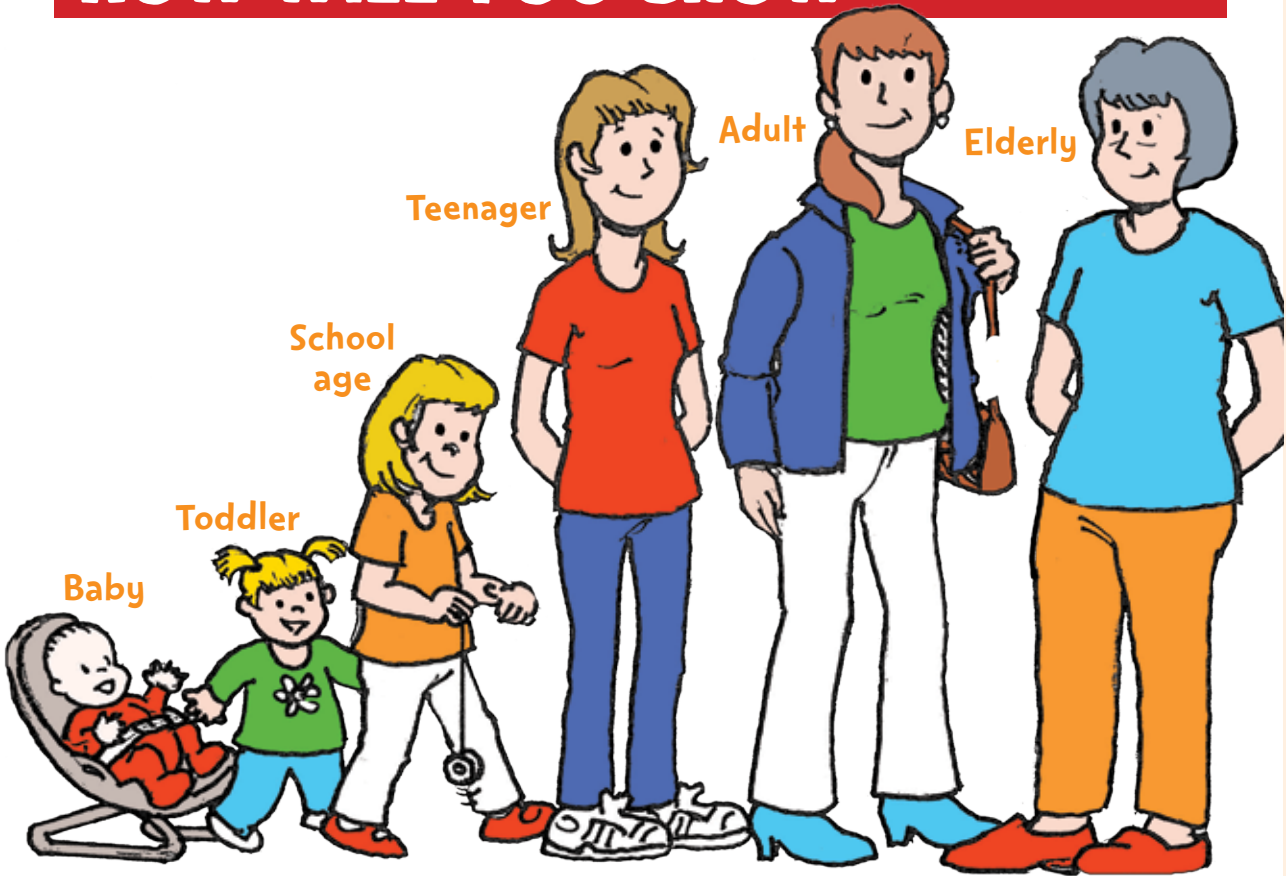
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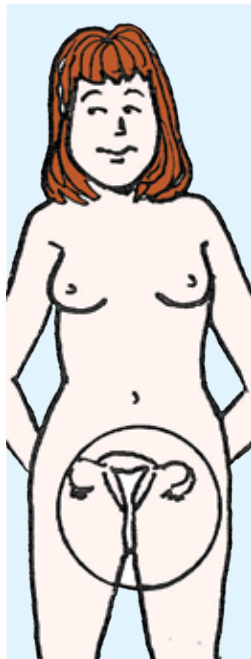
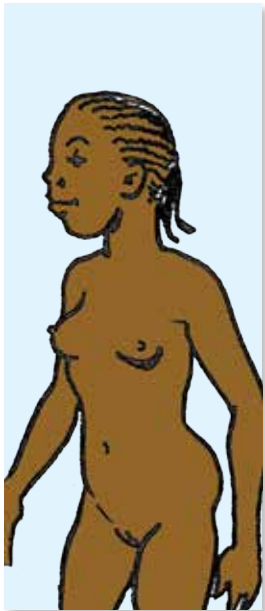
Puberty is the word used to describe all the changes that begin to happen when a child turns into an adult. The changes you go through are preparing your body for reproduction (having children). Your body changes and the way you look at the world will likely change as well. Puberty is a gradual thing and everyone goes through it.

Sometimes when you're in the midst of changes during puberty, it might feel as if there is no one to talk to. But, although it can be difficult to believe, parents/carers often understand more than you think they do. Remember, they went through puberty too! If you don't want to talk to your parents/carers, you could try talking to a trusted relative, friend or teacher. Saying things out loud can be a good way of getting things clear in your mind.

# HOW WILL YOU GROW

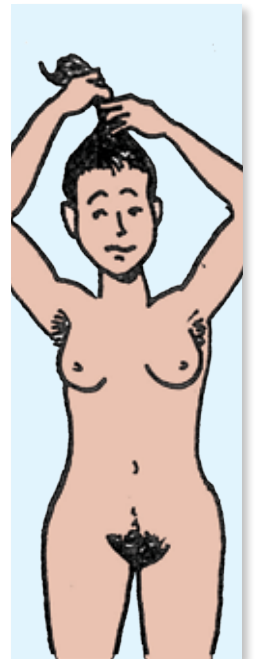


During puberty a girl's body starts to change shape. She grows taller and heavier and her hips and breasts get bigger.



The reproductive organs inside a girl's body start to develop.

The body starts to sweat more and the sweat is smellier, so teenage girls need to wash more frequently.



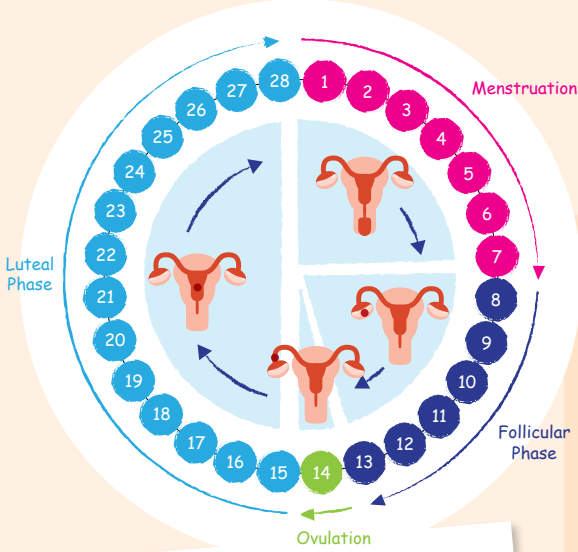
Hair grows in a girl's armpits and around her vulva.

# PERIODS

## WHAT ARE PERIODS?

Simply put, a period is when a woman's body releases tissue it no longer needs. This tissue comes from the uterus, which is where a baby (fetus) can develop in the female body. Every month or so, the uterus lining gets thicker to prepare for a fertilized egg if the woman becomes pregnant. If the egg doesn't get fertilized, that lining is released from the body as blood through the vagina. This monthly process is called menstruation or a period.

So when a girl has her period, her body is just getting rid of a small amount of blood and some unneeded tissue. It is a natural, normal body process for all females as they become women and their bodies mature to prepare them to be able to reproduce (have a child).



When you first have periods the time between one period and the next may vary so it can be difficult to know when you will have your period. When your menstrual cycle becomes more regular you can use a calendar or a period tracker to work out when you're due.

Free Always Period Calculator -

<https://www.always.co.uk/en-gb/period-calculator>

Free Body Form Period Tracker -

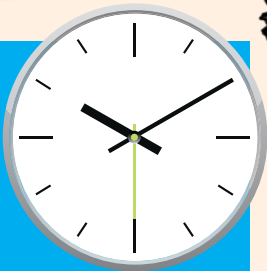
<https://www.bodyform.co.uk/period-tracker>

There is also a range of Period Tracker Apps that you can use.

When a woman reaches puberty she will have up to one million eggs in her ovaries.



Period blood is often thick reddish brown and may have small lumps in it. It only smells when it comes into contact with the air. It is healthy to change your towel or tampon every few hours.



Your vagina is naturally self-cleansing so you don't need to use perfumed pads or special sprays (these can cause irritation).



Some girls experience discomfort such as an aching tummy. Relaxing with a hot water bottle on your tummy can help this, or having a warm bath. Exercise can help or a pain killer in some circumstances. If very painful periods persist it is advisable to talk to somebody. You may need to see a doctor.

# PERIODS

Starting your period can feel like a big change. For most girls it happens between the ages of 11 and 15 but you could be any age from 8 to 18.

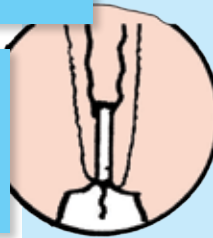
Girls and women wear sanitary products to soak up the blood. Towels and tampons have to be changed every few hours.

Some girls notice an increase in vaginal discharge about two weeks before each period. This may look like a creamy stain in their pants. To begin with your periods might not come regularly but after a while they settle down and come about once a month.

Towels, tampons or period pants? It's your choice. Some people prefer one, some another. But it is important to be prepared. So talk to a grown-up who you trust, maybe a parent, carer or teacher, about what's going to happen and what to do when it does.

Towels stick to the inside of your pants. They soak up the blood as it leaves the body.

Tampons fit inside the vagina and soak up blood before it leaves the body.



Help inserting a tampon without an applicator: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5fOUYPIEew>

Help inserting a tampon with an applicator: <https://youtube.com/3w7l6oaTyMo>

Don't flush a tampon or towel down the toilet as this may block it. Wrap it up and put it in a bin if possible. At school, there may be a special bin for you to use. If you're not sure ask your teacher.



Sometimes girls and women can have problems with tampons leading to a serious illness called toxic shock syndrome (TSS). Stop using tampons and see your doctor straight away if you have two or more of the following symptoms while using tampons: being sick, a rash, sore throat, sudden fever or diarrhoea.

## TIPS ON HOW TO COPE WITH PERIODS

- Make a note of when your period starts, then you will see a pattern emerging...eventually. You can use a period tracker to help with calculating your periods (see page 5 for more information).
- Carry a spare panty liner/sanitary towel in your bag; although the teachers usually have some at school.
- Change your pants daily and keep clean. You do not need to use sprays or scented products.
- Check each break time if you need to change your sanitary product.
- Always make sure you dispose of your tampons and sanitary towels thoughtfully; there should be bins at school.
- Don't try using a tampon when you do not have a period.

## Period Pants

An eco-friendlier option is to buy Period Pants. These pants look and feel like normal underwear, but absorb blood or discharge and keep you dry. Period Pants can be washed and reused time and time again, meaning they last for years. They come in a range of styles and you can even buy period-proof bikini bottoms and sleep shorts.

Other eco-friendly options include menstrual cups, reusable applicator tampons, and biodegradable sanitary towels.



## FEMALE GENITALS

The vulva is the area between a girl's legs

Opening to the urethra (where urine comes out)

Labia (lips) surround the opening of the vagina



Pubic hair

Clitoris (is the sensitive bump)

## GIRLS DON'T MASTURBATE... MYTH!

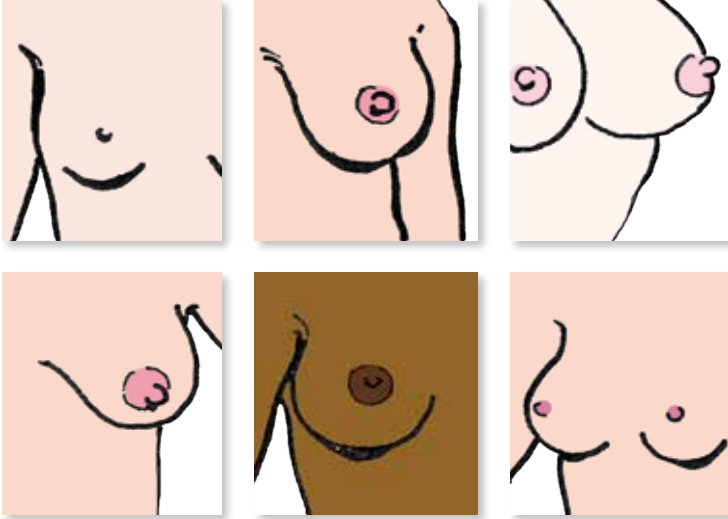
Girls are curious about their bodies and do masturbate. However on average, guys are more likely to report that they masturbate than girls. Girls might be afraid to engage in, or admit to, masturbating to the same degree as boys do.

**Masturbation:** Touching sex organs for pleasure. This could be a male rubbing his penis or a female rubbing her clitoris because it feels good. Masturbation is not harmful. It does not cause acne or blindness, make people crazy or cause any other awful things to happen, but these are myths you might hear. Most people masturbate at some point in their lives. Masturbation is a private activity, so ensure you do it in a private and safe place, such as your bedroom.

# BREASTS

All women have different sized breasts and that is completely normal. However, many girls worry that theirs don't measure up to the images around them. Breasts and nipples tingle or itch while they are developing, but this will stop once they've grown. Growth can be uneven so one breast may be bigger than the other. This will even out but many women have slightly differently sized breasts all their lives. Breasts come in different shapes and sizes and can be soft or firm.

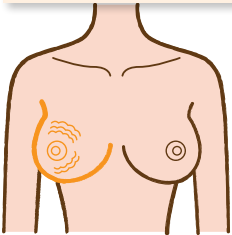
Usually nipples point outwards but some girls have nipples that are inverted (point inwards). This is normal and there is no need to worry. In some women, the nipples remain like this throughout their life. It does not mean there is anything wrong with the breasts, and inverted nipples won't stop you breastfeeding if you have a baby.



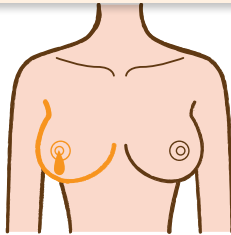
## CHECKING YOUR BREASTS

- It is very important to check your breasts regularly. The more you check them, the more you will know what is "normal" for you, and the more likely you are to notice any changes. It is normal for your breasts to feel more sensitive and change slightly during your menstrual cycle (period). But you also need to be mindful that some changes could be indicating a problem, so it is important to tell a trusted adult.

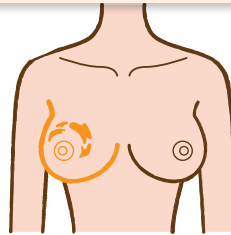
- You can use this simple guide to help you to check your breasts monthly:



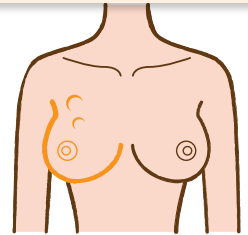
Look for changes in skin texture



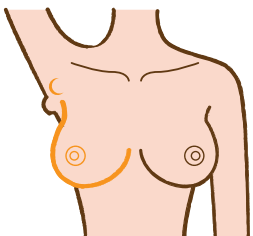
Look for nipple discharge



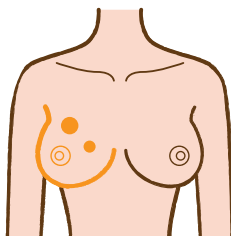
Look for redness or rash



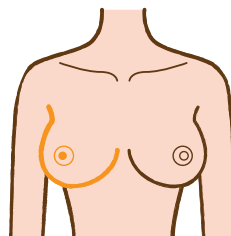
Feel for lumping or thickening



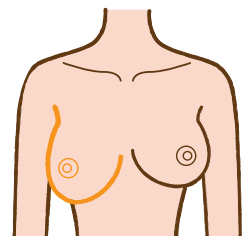
Feel armpit pain



Look for dimpling



Look for size or shape change



Look for pulled in nipple



This website contains a video that demonstrates how to check your breasts and it also has a reminder tool so you are regularly reminded to check your breasts: <https://coppafeel.org/your-boobs/boob-check-101/>

If you do notice any changes in your breasts, do not hesitate to speak to a trusted adult or book an appointment with the doctor straight away.

## WHEN DO I START WEARING A BRA?

There is no set age for when you need to start wearing a bra. Breast buds are the first sign that you are developing breasts. If you have small bumps on your chest or your nipples are starting to protrude, you may want to think about starting to wear a bra. You may want to start with a training bra or a crop top. There are lots of bra shapes available so you might want to try on a range of styles to see what feels right for you. This website can also help you to decide what type of bra might be right for you -

<https://www.littlewomen.com/pages/identifying-your-breast-shape>

## CAN I ASK SOMEONE ELSE TO MEASURE ME?

Most department stores have a bra fitting service that you can use and they would be able to advise you on the type of bra that you will need. You should not feel worried or embarrassed about going to get fitted for a bra as they are professionals and do it every day! However, you might feel more comfortable going with your mum or another trusted family member or friend.

If you do not feel comfortable going into a shop to get fitted, there are various websites that offer bra fitting advice:



## BRA FITTING GUIDES

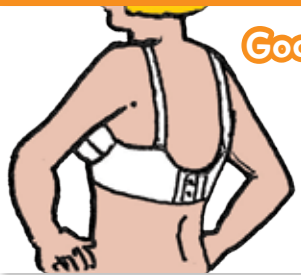
<https://www.bravissimo.com/bra-fitting-guide/>

<https://www.belle-lingerie.co.uk/guides/bra-fitting-guide>

<https://www.marksandspencer.com/c/lingerie/be-inspired/bra-fitting-tool#>

<https://www.littlewomen.com/pages/measuring-guide>

## HOW SHOULD A BRA FIT?



### Good Fit

A good fit – the bra is snug and lower in the back than in the front, allowing the band to provide the support and keep the weight off the shoulders.



### Bad Fit



### Good Fit

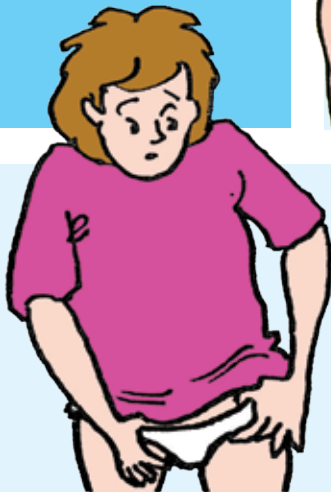
A good fit – the breasts fit into the cups completely with no bulges over the top, under the arms, or out the bottom.



### Bad Fit

# KEEPING CLEAN

- It is important to wash yourself every day.
- Don't forget underarms and the genital area.
- Change your underwear and socks/tights every day.
- Clean and brush your teeth regularly.



## ABOUT DISCHARGE

It's normal to have some discharge from your vagina as this natural lubricant keeps your vagina healthy. This is usually clear or slightly milky and may be faintly yellow when it dries on your pants. When you're sexually excited your vagina produces a natural lubricant to make having sex easier. The amount of discharge increases around ovulation to help the sperm swim up your vagina to meet an egg.

## SOMETHING UNUSUAL?

If you have an unusual discharge that itches and/or smells see a doctor as you may have an infection called thrush, which can be caused by wearing tight jeans, using perfumed soap or bubble bath, or just feeling run down. If you have had sex you may have caught a sexually transmitted infection. Whatever the cause, it can usually be easily treated.



# CHOICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sometimes it might seem like sex is everywhere and everyone's doing it... you hear sex talked about on TV and social media, in songs and conversations. You see magazines and advertisements showing sexy people. You hear jokes about sex, or people calling out horrible things.

Fancying people is part of growing up. You may get exciting feelings when you think about them – and may imagine yourself kissing or being close to them. These are called sexual feelings.

Sometimes you fancy people you know. Sometimes you fancy someone famous. They may be the opposite sex to you or the same sex.

But you can be good friends with lots of people without fancying them. Sometimes you may not fancy anyone at all.

Everyone is curious about the world when growing up and it's natural to want to try things out. One day when you are grown up, you will probably want to have sex but this should be when you and your partner are both ready.

Putting pressure on someone to have sex could ruin what could have been a great relationship. And you don't have to have sex with everyone you go out with.

When people talk about having sex, they are often talking about sexual intercourse – when a man's penis enters the woman's vagina. This can lead to the woman becoming pregnant. It only takes one sperm to fertilise a woman's egg and create a baby. And a girl can get pregnant even before her first period.

It's against the law for anyone to have sex with someone who is under 16, but of course many people wait until they are older. Young people who've had sex early often wish they'd waited. If you have any doubts, or think that you will regret it, then wait.

Being grown-up about sex is treating yourself and other people with respect, and not being afraid to ask for help if you need it or if you don't understand something. Sometimes you'll hear things about sex that you're really not sure about. So you need to check out these things, and asking friends your own age isn't always the best way. It's great if you can talk to a parent or your carer, but sometimes you can't. Other family members may be really helpful – older brothers or sisters, uncles, aunts or grandparents. There are other people too, such as a teacher or an older friend you trust.

Growing up and sex are normal everyday parts of life that happen to everyone.

## WHO CAN HELP YOU?

Parents or carers

Trusted adult

School nurse

Teacher

Childline – [Childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk), 0800 1111, they also have puberty message boards where you can ask questions <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/message-boards/>



# PROBLEM PAGE

With all these worries and concerns, the best advice is to talk to someone you trust.

**Q. What is Female Masturbation?**

**A.** Masturbation (fingering) is something women might not talk about, but most people do it. Most women rub around, or on, their clitoris and maybe move fingers in and out of the vagina. If you masturbate to the point of orgasm, the muscles in your vagina will move in spasms and feelings of pleasure will flow through your whole body. Many women fantasise while they masturbate.

**Q. Is it bad for you?**

**A.** No. You don't need to feel guilty about exploring your own body and you won't get pregnant, catch a sexually transmitted infection or get a broken heart. But it's your choice to do it or not. You can masturbate alone and it is important to do it in a private place, such as your bedroom.

**Q: What if I start my period at school?**

**A:** First of all, do not panic! An adult in school will be able to help you. All schools have access to free sanitary wear so they will be able to provide you with a sanitary towel. If you are worried about asking, you could always carry a sanitary towel in your school bag every day, just in case!

**Q. What happens if you start your period in the swimming pool?**

**A.** It is very unlikely that this would happen, but if it did, the pressure of the water would not allow the blood to flow until you got out of the pool. Lots of girls and women enjoy swimming regularly; it is good exercise. You can only go during your period if you use tampons or period swimwear.

**Q. I am worried about using tampons. I don't know how to put one in and I am frightened it will hurt or get lost inside me?**

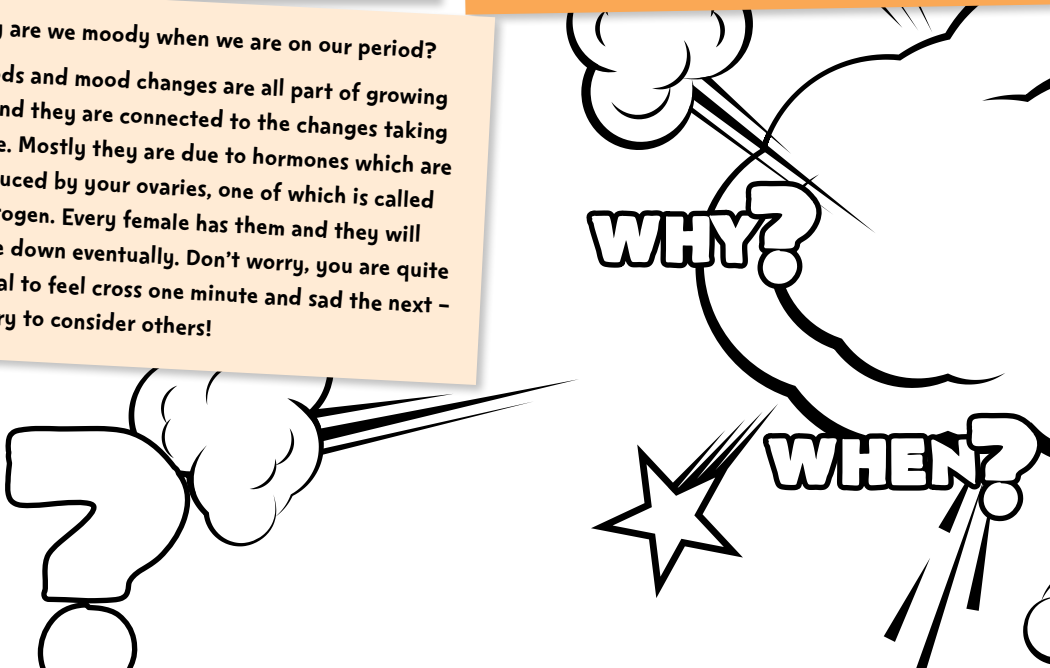
**A.** All tampons have a little leaflet inside the box explaining how to use them. If the tampon is uncomfortable it probably means it is not in the right position. Don't feel pressurised into using them if you don't want to. It is very much a personal decision. Perhaps you could talk to your mum or teacher. Tampons cannot actually get stuck or lost inside you, as the vagina is very 'stretchy'.

**Q. How do you get rid of spots and why do you get them anyway?**

**A.** Spots happen partly because of those wretched hormones again. They make your skin more greasy so the best thing to do is keep your skin clean using a cleanser – there are lots to choose from. You could also try not to eat too many fatty foods or sweets and chocolate, but try to have more fruit and make sure you drink lots of water as this will help to clear your skin. It will settle down, honestly!

**Q. Why are we moody when we are on our period?**

**A.** Moods and mood changes are all part of growing up and they are connected to the changes taking place. Mostly they are due to hormones which are produced by your ovaries, one of which is called oestrogen. Every female has them and they will settle down eventually. Don't worry, you are quite normal to feel cross one minute and sad the next – just try to consider others!



Q: I think I am more like a boy sometimes, should I try to not be like that?

A: We all feel happier when we are being ourselves. If you are worried about this, you may benefit from talking to someone to support you with how you feel. We all express our identity in different ways, and your own way of being you is unique to you, just like your fingerprint!

Q. What if I have romantic feelings for another girl?

A. Sometimes girls have feelings for each other which feel more romantic than a friendship. This is ok, and very common. These feelings may grow stronger and it is good to talk about how you feel to a trusted friend or adult. Lesbian is the term used for a girl who is in a relationship with someone of the same gender.

Q. I am not happy with my body. I think I am too fat and, although my family tell me I am fine, some people at school think I should try to stay really slim. Help! I don't know what to eat.

A. As we have said before, puberty is a special time when your body is doing a lot of growing and changing. It is not a good idea to deprive it of food at this time as you are likely to make yourself unwell. Unfortunately lots of images in magazines and on television show attractive people as only being thin. **THIS IS ABSOLUTELY NOT TRUE!** What makes a person attractive is the way they treat others. Kindness is attractive, so is consideration. We are designed to be all different shapes and sizes. You are fine as you are - celebrate YOU!

Q. How can I tell my boyfriend that I don't want to kiss him and stuff like that?

A. This is difficult as I am guessing you don't want to hurt his feelings. The best thing to do is to be honest with him; part of being in a good relationship is being able to tell each other how you feel. If he really cares he will not push you into doing anything you don't feel comfortable with and nobody should. One of the nice things about growing up is being able to make more of your own decisions - don't let anyone pressure you into doing something you don't want to.



# HEALTHY SELFIES

Selfies have become so common that you might not think twice before snapping and sharing your photos. Unfortunately, not all selfies are healthy and you need to know the difference between an innocent photo and a potentially dangerous situation.

## Think Location, Location, Location

You should be careful not to reveal any private information, especially regarding location. Many social media platforms and apps have GPS features that tag photos with the sender's location. Avoid these apps altogether or, at a minimum, disable any GPS capabilities. Check your photos for other details that may reveal your location such as street signs and landmarks.

## Zoom in On Reputation

Posting something online is like writing with a Sharpie—it's permanent. Selfies, of course, are no exception. The best selfies to post are those that express contentment and self-confidence.

It is never ok to send a revealing picture to anyone, even if it supposed to be kept private. Even Snapchats, which disappear within seconds, can be captured with a screen shot and shared with the whole world in an instant.

## Everything is not as it appears

With a vast range of filters available on social media, remember that most photos and selfies you will see are not true to life. Filters can allow you to get rid of spots, get bigger lips and boobs, brighten your eyes, and many other things. Do not feel pressurised to try and look a certain way, as most images you see will have been altered. Everyone is unique and this should be embraced!

Dove clip on selfies -

<http://youtu.be/z2T-Rh838GA>

## Online Friendships

It is very common now for us to have friends who we communicate with online via chat services, social media and online gaming. This is great as it can feel like we can contact our friends any time we need to talk, and it can help us to feel close to our friends. However, it is also very important to take care when making friends or chatting with friends online.

**Remember**, if someone asks you to do something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, don't do it, and tell a trusted adult.

## Where to get more information?

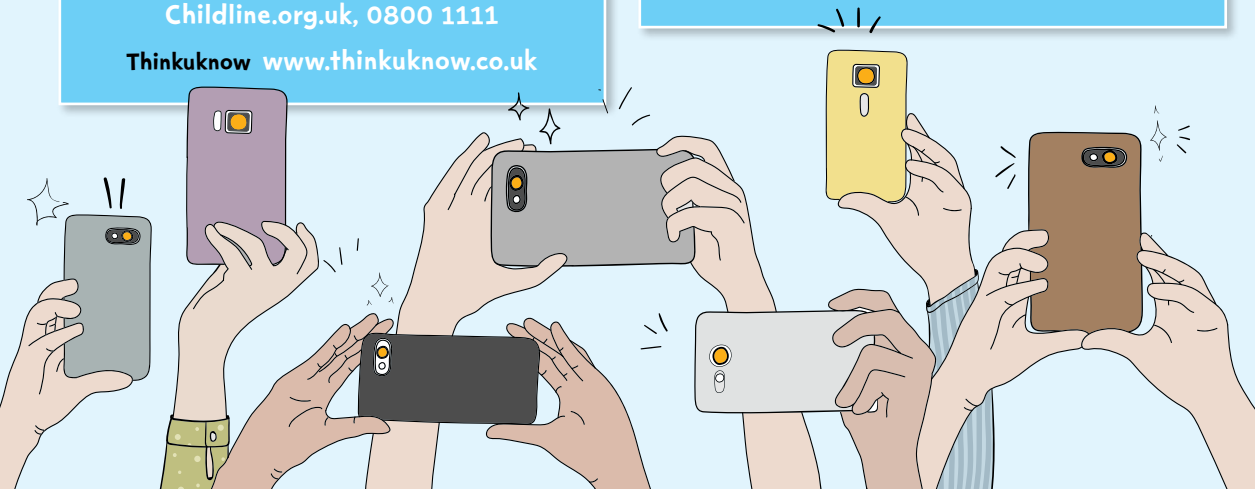
Childline - Staying Safe Online

Childline.org.uk, 0800 1111

Thinkuknow [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

While social media can be a good way to stay in touch with our friends, it can also be unsafe. When people are online, they can hide who they really are. They might send you a photo or video they say is of themselves when it isn't actually them. So it's important to be really careful and not trust people online if you can't be sure who they are.

Never give out personal information (such as your full name, address or date of birth).



# HELPFUL WEBSITES

## General Puberty

Puberty information for girls - Always website -

<https://www.always.co.uk/en-gb/tips-and-advice-for-girls-and-parents/my-body/>

Puberty for girls - <https://bcove.video/2xGCIMT>

Puberty for boys - <https://bcove.video/2DLKlwb>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/puberty/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/puberty/puberty-boys/>

Boys change too - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJtt7kOaiAA>

## Testicles

Video on how to check your testicles

- <https://www.testicularcanceruk.com/how-to-check-testicles>

## Periods

Always website has a free period calculator -

<https://www.always.co.uk/en-gb/period-calculator/>

Body form Period Tracker - <https://www.bodyform.co.uk/period-tracker/>

There are also a range of Period Tracker Apps that you can use.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.period.tracker.lite&hl=en&gl=US>

Period information Always website -

<https://www.always.co.uk/en-gb/tips-and-advice-for-girls-and-parents/my-period/>

## Breasts and Bras

This website has a video that demonstrates how to check your breasts, pecs or chest.

It also has a reminder tool to help you to remember to check your chest regularly:

<https://coppafeel.org/your-boobs/boob-check-101/>

## Bra fitting guide

<https://www.bravissimo.com/bra-fitting-guide/>

<https://www.belle-lingerie.co.uk/guides/bra-fitting-guide>

<https://www.marksandspencer.com/c/lingerie/be-inspired/bra-fitting-tool#>

<https://www.littlewomen.com/pages/measuring-guide>

<https://www.littlewomen.com/pages/identifying-your-breast-shape>

## Other helpful sites

Confidential help from a local healthcare professional - <https://chathealth.nhs.uk/>

Advice and support for your emotional wellbeing - <https://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk/>

Online safety - <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>



# ONLINE SAFETY

It's very important to be careful about what you're sharing online. Everything you post contributes to your 'digital footprint'. This means even things you think you're just sharing privately with your friend could potentially be seen by anyone, like other pupils at your school or complete strangers.

Before you post or share your next photo or video, ask yourself:

## What do I look like?

If you didn't know you, what would you think about the photo or video? What would you think about the person who posted it?

Things we might share with friends as a joke can look very different to someone else, and that might be someone you're trying to impress.

## Is this permanent?

When you share something online, you can lose control of it. Even if you delete a photo or take down a post, you can't be sure it hasn't already been copied.

Think about how many people you're sharing with and whether they will take care of what you share. It's easy for other people to copy what you post online, change it and share it without you knowing.

## Am I giving away too much?

The more you share, the more people can learn about you. Could they use your post against you?

If someone saw your content, would it hurt their feelings? Would you want other people you didn't know to see it? What if your family saw it?

Could someone find out where you live? Or your routine?

## Would I like this shared about me?

It's important to think about the impact on others of what you post online. Do you have your friend's permission to share the picture you took of them from the weekend?

Ask yourself: Would you be happy to see your latest update plastered on a huge sign or on a shop window noticeboard for all your family, neighbours, sports club friends and school mates to see? If not, it's probably worth thinking twice before you click the 'post' or 'send' button.



# HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF...

## Am I normal?

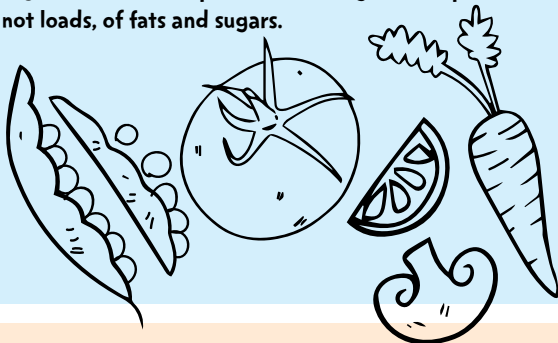
It's just human nature to compare ourselves with others. However, we are all different and unique and it's important to try not to compare yourself to others; you are you!

So, what is normal during puberty? Well, we all develop at different rates and at different times. The time your voice breaks, you start your period, your pubic hair grows, and how quickly you grow taller will vary from person to person. The important thing to remember is that everyone will get there in the end – and it's not a race!

## Looking after your body during puberty

Eating a healthy balanced diet and being active are important at every stage of life, including puberty. Don't worry if you're not the sporty type – there are lots of different ways to stay active without being part of a sports team or gym, such as walking or cycling alone or with friends, swimming or dancing. Find the type of physical activity that you enjoy and you'll find that staying active is easy!

As your body is growing, you may be hungrier often, but a balanced diet is still important: lots of fruit & veg and carbs together with some protein and dairy foods – plus some, but not loads, of fats and sugars.



## Puberty shopping list

What sort of things might you want to add to a shopping list which you will find useful during puberty?

**Soap / shower gel / shampoo** – puberty is a time when your body may start producing lots more sweat, especially after being physically active, so you may want to have a wash or jump in the shower or bath a bit more often than you did before. Washing under the armpits and around the genitals is especially important.

**Deodorant / antiperspirant** – these help to deal with body odour. Deodorants, as the name suggests, 'deodorise' which means that they help to protect against smelly sweat, whereas antiperspirants help to reduce sweat as well as deal with the odour. It's up to you which you use. Experiment to find out what's best for you.

**More underwear** – you should wear a fresh pair of pants and socks every day. However, if you are doing lots of sweaty exercise then you may also wish to have fresh underwear to put on after a wash or shower.

**Shaver / mirror** – when facial or body hair starts appearing you may want to consider shaving. Some people prefer to 'wet shave' whereas others prefer to use an electric shaver or other hair removal products. It might be a good idea to ask someone older than you (that you trust) to help when you first start shaving just to make sure that you're doing it properly.

## How do you feel?

We can't help how we feel; emotions are a part of what makes us human. During puberty, boys' brains send a signal to the testes to tell them to begin making testosterone and sperm. Girls' brains send a signal to produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone to trigger egg release and uterus lining within the menstrual cycle. Testosterone, oestrogen and progesterone are responsible for most of the changes that happen in our bodies during puberty. They can also affect our moods making us feel, for example, more frustrated, annoyed or angry. Sometimes it can feel like you're on a bit of a rollercoaster with your emotions. But don't worry, in time everything will settle down and the rollercoaster ride will end!



## Positive body image

Body image is the way you think and feel about your body and looks. How you feel about your body affects how you feel about yourself. Many people feel unhappy with some part of their looks. But if you get too focused on what you don't like, it can bring down your self-esteem.

Movies, reality TV stars and social media can portray a certain perfect body image that males and females should have. It is important to remember that these images you see in social media are not the "norm". Many images are often enhanced and adapted using airbrushing and other filters.

You don't need a perfect body to have a good body image. You just need to accept the body you have. Focus more on what you like than what you don't. Take good care of your body. Doing these things will help you feel good about your body. And about yourself.

## Can puberty affect body image?

Your body changes a lot during puberty. How you feel about your body might change too. It can take time to feel at ease in a body you're not used to.

And not everyone goes through puberty at the same time. It can feel awkward if you're the first one whose voice is changing or whose period is starting. It can be tough if you're one of the last to change too. But as you get used to it, you can feel good about your more mature body.

## How can I have a better body image?

Want to feel better about your body? Here are some ideas:

- **Find things to like about your looks.** Focus on what you do like more than what you don't.
- **Focus on what your body can do.** Can you walk, swim, ride a bike, dance, draw, paint, play a musical instrument? Your body is more than it looks.
- **Be active every day.** Your body needs to move to be healthy and fit. Have fun. Let yourself feel glad about what your body can do. A good workout boosts your mood too.
- **Treat your body right.** To feel good about your body, take care of it. Don't smoke or do other things you know are harmful. Eat good foods. Get enough sleep. Keep your body clean.
- **Be yourself.** Your body is just one part of who you are. Focus on the qualities you have. Are you honest, kind, a good friend? Good at science, or writing? Animal lover? A reader, artist, musician? There's lots that's good about you - celebrate these!
- **Do things to help.** Use your body's strength, skill, or energy to help others. Did you know your body image can get a boost when you (gladly) do a chore that helps out? So, help your little sister with her homework, mow the lawn for a neighbour, or clean up the dishes. It feels good to help.



## HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

With your body going through all these changes it is good to have support from caring friends. So it is important to make sure your friendships are healthy. Think about what makes a 'healthy friendship'.

Tick the boxes for the criteria that you think makes a healthy relationship.

- Someone who can keep a secret if I ask them to
- Someone who says we must always agree on everything if we are friends
- Someone who always sticks up for me
- Someone who tells me the truth
- Someone who laughs at my mum's car
- Someone who always has the coolest new phone
- Someone who can tell if I am worried about something
- Someone who makes me do dares even when I say I would rather not
- Someone who says sorry
- Someone who won't tell on me
- Someone who always looks good
- Someone who talks to me on some days, but not on others
- Someone who shares any treats they have with me
- Someone who always spends time with me, even when they have a new boyfriend/girlfriend/partner
- Someone who makes me laugh

If you feel you have an unhealthy relationship with a friend or family member, speak to a trusted adult or friend about these feelings.