

## Puberty and body changes



There are lots of changes that happen to the body during puberty.

Some changes are slow.

Some changes are fast.

Everybody is different so it can be hard to know when puberty will start or what changes will happen first.

For female bodies, puberty might start between the age of 8 and 13.

For male bodies, puberty might start between the age of 10 and 15.

This means that it is important to talk to your child about puberty from a young age.

This will help them to feel prepared for when their body starts to change.



## What is on this page?

This page is about how you can teach your child about normal body changes that can happen at puberty.

It has easy read information about:

- normal changes in puberty
- what to do if you are worried about body changes
- preparing your child for body changes

## What are the normal body changes in puberty?

There are lots of different body changes that happen during puberty.

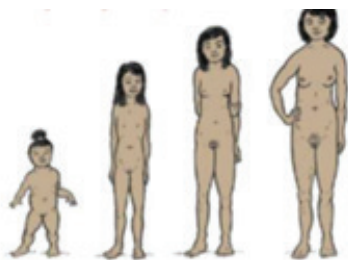
Some of these changes will happen to everybody.



Some of these changes will depend on whether you were born with a male or a female body.

### Changes that happen to everyone

- Growing taller and gaining weight
- Getting stronger
- Getting sweaty and smelly more often
- Getting oily skin and pimples
- Growing hair around private body parts, under the arms and growing thicker hair on arms and legs



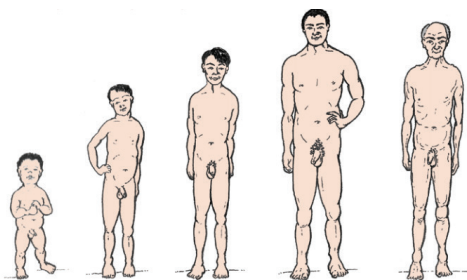
## Changes to the female body

- Hips getting wider
- Growing breasts
- Getting discharge from vagina in your underwear

Discharge is sticky, wet stuff that comes out of a vagina.

You can learn more about it [here](#)

- Starting your period



## Changes to the male body

- Shoulders and chest getting wider
- Growing hair on your face and chest
- Voice breaking and sounding deeper
- Penis and testicles growing bigger and getting darker

- Getting erections more often and starting wet dreams
- A little bit of breast tissue developing and feeling sore.

This will usually go away later

### What to do if you are worried about body changes

It is a good idea to speak to your doctor if:



- you are worried that your child's puberty is starting too early
- you are worried that your child's puberty is starting too late
- you are not sure about what will happen during puberty because of your child's disability or health
- your child finds puberty changes painful or upsetting

- you are worried about your child's health and wellbeing during puberty

## How to prepare your child for body changes



It can be hard to know how to prepare your child for the body changes they will experience during puberty.

Here are a few ways that you can start talking about body changes with your child.

### Talk about it early

It is good to talk to your child about puberty before it starts.

This will give them lots of time to learn new information and skills to help them with their body changes.



You can talk about body changes in everyday life.

- ‘I think you grew taller overnight!’

It’s normal for your body to change and grow.

Have you noticed any other changes you want to talk about?’

- ‘Do you remember when (friend, family member, TV show character) was little?’

They are so big and grown up now!

How can you tell that they are a grown up?’



## Keep information simple

Use resources that are easy to read and use pictures.

Teach your child about simpler body changes first, like growing taller.

Over time you can slowly tell them about all the other changes that will happen to their body.

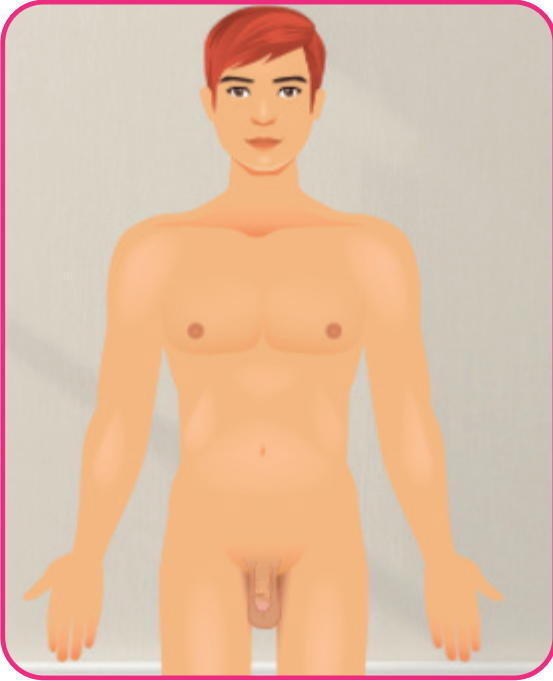
Repeat this information often.

This will help your child remember what they have learned.

Use the proper names for private body parts.

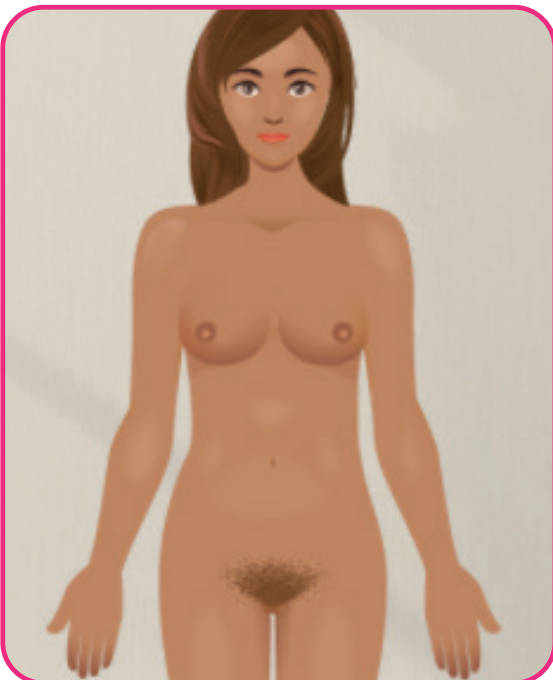
This can help your child keep safe. It can also help your child to feel confident and good in their body.





The private body parts are:

- breasts
- vulva
- clitoris
- labia
- vagina
- penis
- testes
- buttocks
- anus



Read the [Private Body Parts](#) sheet for more information about teaching children to use correct names for private body parts.



## Make body changes normal

It can be scary for parents to see their child become a teenager.

Your child might also feel scared and confused about their body changes.

It is important to support your child to see that body changes are normal.

They are a sign that your child is growing up!

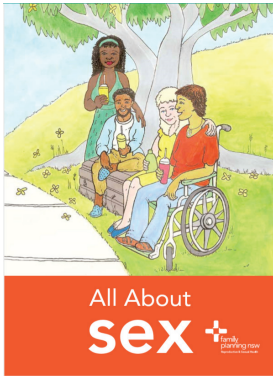
You can help your child to make body changes normal by:

- talking about changes early
- telling your child that everybody goes through these changes (even yourself!)
- telling your child that everyone's body changes in a way that is just right for that person

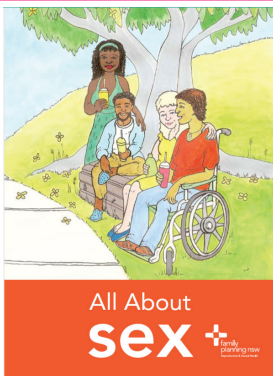
## Resources for you to use

### All About Sex Factsheets – A woman's body

Family Planning NSW



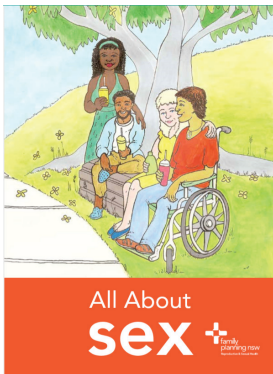
[https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet\\_03\\_a\\_womans\\_body.pdf](https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet_03_a_womans_body.pdf)



### All About Sex Factsheets – A man's body

Family Planning NSW

[https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet\\_04\\_a\\_mans\\_body.pdf](https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet_04_a_mans_body.pdf)



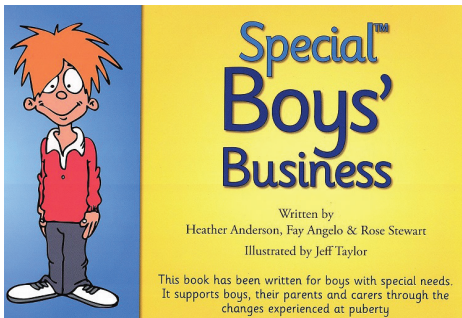
## All About Sex Factsheets – Puberty

Family Planning NSW

[https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet\\_06\\_puberty.pdf](https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet_06_puberty.pdf)

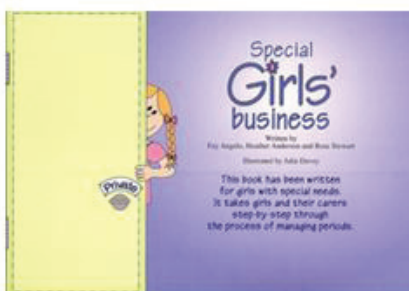
**BODY  
TALK**

[www.bodytalk.org.au](http://www.bodytalk.org.au)



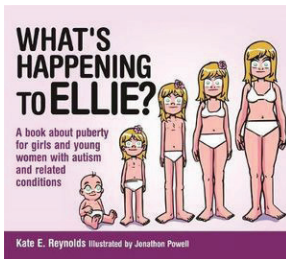
## Special Boys Business

Heather Anderson, Fay Angelo and  
Rose Stewart



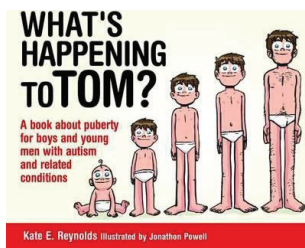
## Special Girls Business

Heather Anderson, Fay Angelo and  
Rose Stewart



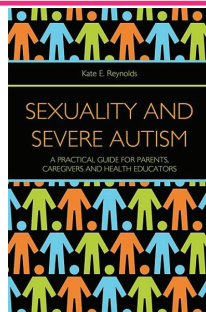
## What's Happening to Ellie

Kate E Reynolds



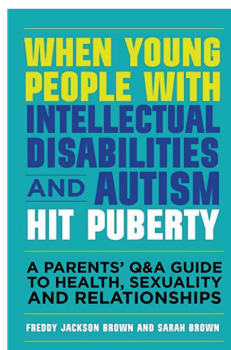
## What's Happening to Tom

Kate E Reynolds



## Sexuality and Severe Autism

Kate E Reynolds



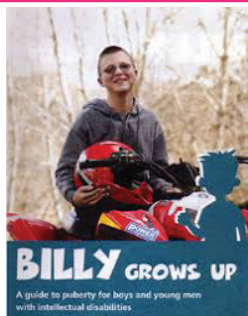
## When Young People with ID/ASD Hit Puberty

Freddy Jackson Brown and Sarah Brown



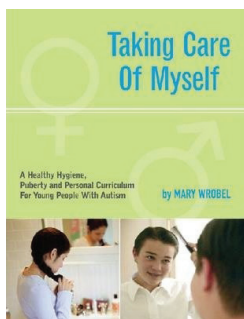
## Tara Grows Up

IHC New Zealand



## Billy Grows Up

IHC New Zealand



## Taking Care of Myself

Mary Wrobel



## What to read next?

- Emotional and behavioural changes
- How to talk about the differences between girls' and boys' bodies

**For more information go to the Planet Puberty website**

[www.planetpuberty.org.au](http://www.planetpuberty.org.au)