

PUBERTY KIT

The PUBERTY KIT is a tool that may be used to assist in teaching about puberty and personal hygiene. Pre-made kits may be available from school nurses or you can use the list below to assemble your own kit. Any products shown in pre-made kits are examples of similar products available. Use of any particular brand is not endorsed.

How to use a PUBERTY KIT

To use the PUBERTY KIT, have each item available to guide discussion. Use the discussion points below to explain what the item is and how it can be used to cope with puberty changes.

- Not all of the items are appropriate for all grades in various school boards.
- Lesson plans and activities are available at: www.teachingsexualhealth.ca

PUBERTY KIT CONTENTS LIST AND DESCRIPTION

Active Living

- Physical and recreational activities such as sports, walking and having fun with friends outside can improve energy, physical and mental well-being.

Antiperspirant and/or Deodorant

- Can be used in addition to daily washing of the underarms.
- Antiperspirant stops sweat from forming and deodorant is an absorbent odor remover.
- Check ingredient list for allergies or other concerns.

Athletic Supporter

- Can be worn as support or protection for genitals during contact sports (e.g., hockey, football).

Baking Soda in Box

- Can be used as an inexpensive, absorbent foot powder, deodorant or dry shampoo.

Hat

- Hats or caps can become dirty. Wash or change hats to keep germs, dirt, old sweat and oil from being rubbed onto the face or hair.
- Hats are good protection from the sun's heat and damaging rays.

Bra – youth size

- People can wear a bra for comfort, modesty and support as their breasts develop.
- Some boys develop breast tissue for a year or more, but this will usually go away.

Comb

- A comb or brush can be used to manage and untangle hair.
- Some may also choose to style hair, as concerns about appearance and looks become more important.

Healthy Nutrition

- Eating healthy food choices improves energy, physical and mental well-being.
- Work towards increasing fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while minimizing high fat and high sugar foods/drinks.

- May reduce menstrual symptoms such as bloating and cramping.

Hot Water Bottle

- Exercise and warmth may help with menstrual cramps.
- Good alternative to pain medications.

Ibuprofen

- Exercise, a warm bath, hot water bottle or over the counter medications such as Ibuprofen may help with menstrual cramps and discomfort.
- Do not take any medication without asking a parent or guardian first.
- If pain medications are used, make sure to NOT take more than the recommended amounts.

Socks

- Wash feet and change socks every day
- Occasionally, wash the insoles of shoes.

Laundry Soap

- Wear clean socks and underwear every day and wash clothes often.
- If a person has had a wet dream and semen is ejaculated on bedding and/or pajamas, wash the bedding and/or pajamas.
- It is important to learn how to do your own laundry in the machine, laundromat or sink.

Menstruation Supplies - Pads, Pads with “Wings”, Pantyliners, Tampons, Menstrual Cup

- It can be a good idea to always keep menstrual supplies handy in a locker or bag.
- Pads and sometimes tampons are usually available at school offices.
- Menstrual supplies can be bought at drug, grocery, convenience and health stores.
- Choose menstrual products that are unscented.
- NEVER dispose of menstrual products in the toilet. Place used supplies in the garbage.

Pads are applied to underwear to absorb menstrual flow as it leaves the vagina.

- Pads come in a variety of shapes and sizes.
- Pads attach to the inside of underwear by sticky strips. If they have wings, the wings wrap around the leg openings of the underwear.
- Change and dispose of used pads often (wrap in toilet paper and put in the garbage.)

Pantyliners are similar to pads and absorb light menstrual flow or vaginal discharge.

Tampons are absorbent products put inside the vagina to absorb menstrual flow before it leaves the vagina. They may or may not come with a plastic or cardboard applicator.

- Use the lowest absorbency needed; if the tampon is still somewhat dry after 3 or 4 hours, use a lighter absorbency.
- It is important to follow the instructions carefully to learn how to use safely. Check in with a trusted adult for support. Incorrect use can result in Toxic Shock Syndrome, a rare but serious infection.
- Tampons need to be changed often: usually at least every 4 hours during the day and no longer than 6-8 hours at night. Follow the instructions for that particular product.
- To dispose of used tampons, wrap them in toilet paper and put them into the garbage.

Menstrual cups are silicone or plastic cups that are inserted into the vagina and collect menstrual flow before it leaves the body. Follow the instructions for how to insert.

- Can be safely left in for up to 12 hours, but may need changed more often.
- Disposable cups are removed, wrapped in toilet paper and put in the garbage.
- Diva cups are removed, rinsed as directed and reinserted.

Razor in Baggie

- Some people remove their hair on their face, under arms and legs; others do not.
- It is very important to never share razors, not even with family members.
- Pubic hair (on genitals) is normal and healthy. Some people may choose to remove pubic hair. Talk to a trusted adult.

Shampoo

- Used to wash hair to clean away the oil and dirt.
- Some people wash their hair every day or two; some less often.
- Over-washing can increase oil production and irritate the scalp.

Shaving Foam

- Shaving with moisture feels better as it reduces friction. It also lowers the risk of razor burn or skin irritation.
- Some people use shaving foam, or soap and water.

Soap/Shower Gel

- A mild or unscented soap in bar or liquid form is used for showering or bathing and for washing the face twice daily.
- If a person doesn't shower or bath daily, it is important to remember to wash the feet, neck/ears, armpits and genital-anal area daily (anywhere dark, damp).
- Scented, deodorant soaps can cause dry skin.

Toothbrush, Toothpaste, and Dental Floss

- Brush and floss teeth at least twice a day.
- Also brush the tongue and inside of the cheeks.
- Visit the dentist once or twice a year for checkups.
- Do not share toothbrushes.

T-Shirt Cotton

- Natural fibers such as cotton allow the skin to breathe. Clothes made from these fabrics may be more comfortable to wear.
- It is important to wash clothes often.

Underwear Cotton

- Choose cotton or natural fiber underwear as they allow the skin to "breathe" and keep moisture away from the body.
- It is important to change underwear every day.
- Synthetic underwear (e.g., nylon, polyester, rayon) and very tight underwear may increase the risk of infection.
- Underwear should be comfortably loose. This allows the scrotum to move close to or away from the body to adjust the temperature of the testicles, to promote the growth of healthy sperm.

Wash Cloth

- A clean washcloth or sponge can be used twice daily to wash the face with warm water and mild soap.
- Generally, no other skin care products are necessary unless advised by a doctor or parents.

Water Bottle

- Drinking water is important especially during physical activity and hot weather.
- Plain water is the easiest, least expensive and doesn't cause tooth decay.
- It is important to NOT share water bottles or other objects like forks, chap/lip stick and straws, even with close friends or family members, as they can spread germs that can cause sickness or infection.
- Energy drinks and caffeinated drinks do not count as water and may lead to serious health problems.
- Sodas and juices do not count as water and have high sugar content.
- Artificially sweetened drinks do not count as water and may lead to health problems.

Youth may have questions about:

- Douches – douching (squirting water or other liquid) into the vagina is unnecessary and **not recommended** as they may lead to infection. The vagina cleans itself naturally with vaginal discharge.
- Feminine deodorant spray – using perfume or deodorant in the genital area is unnecessary and **not recommended** as they may lead to infection. Washing the vulva, labia and vaginal areas with water and a mild soap daily is important.
- Yeast infections - a yeast infection is an infection of the vagina. Anytime there is itching, pain or unusual discharge from the vagina it is important to talk to a parent or trusted adult. There are treatments available.