



Puberty Kit

Instructions & Speaker Notes

A Puberty Kit is a tool that can help teach about hygiene and puberty in community and school settings. Seeing and feeling items that can support health during puberty can build familiarity which can build a youth's confidence to talk about and use the items.

Making a Puberty Kit

You may have access to a pre-made kit through your agency, school or school board. However, it may be more practical to make your own kit to keep at your site.

To make your own kit:

1. Gather items listed in this document.
 - Having physical items is preferable to images to support learning.
 - Consider using unscented products to create safer environments.
 - Find and print images of items if you're unable to find actual items.
2. Print out this document.
3. Put these items and this document in a box or bag labelled "Puberty Kit."

Using a Puberty Kit

There isn't one correct way to use a Puberty Kit. Refer to the following pages for talking points about each item in the kit. Then consider:

- Assigning each student/group of students an item from the kit. They learn and then teach the group about how the item can be used to help with puberty.
- Holding up each item and leading a class discussion about how the item can be used to help with puberty.
- Presenting a variety of puberty changes and the class can find items from the kit that might help with that change.
- Using a lesson plan such as those at teachingsexualhealth.ca. ***If you are a teacher in Alberta schools, ensure that teaching and learning resources are approved by the Minister and by your school board administration.***



Alberta Curriculum

In Alberta, the puberty kit specifically relates to Grade 4 outcomes in the curriculum.

Organizing Idea: Growth and Development – decision making that optimizes personal health and well-being is informed by understanding growth and development		
Guiding Question: <i>How is change reflected through development?</i>		
Learning Outcome: <i>Students explain how development and puberty are connected</i>		
Knowledge	Understanding	Skills & Procedures
<i>Differences in physical characteristics can occur during and after the onset of puberty</i> <i>The progression of puberty can be experienced in unique ways.</i> <i>Physical changes in puberty include</i> • <i>Growth of body hair</i> • <i>Skin changes</i> • <i>Voice changes</i> • <i>Sperm production</i> • <i>Menstruation</i> <i>Puberty can result in social-emotional changes, such as</i> • <i>Increased intensity of feelings</i> • <i>Friendships becoming more important</i> • <i>Emphasis on body image</i> • <i>Wanting to fit in and be liked</i>	<i>Puberty is a process of maturation that includes physical and social-emotional changes.</i> <i>Awareness of changes that happen in puberty can support mental health and emotional well-being.</i>	<i>Describe changes that happen during puberty.</i>
<i>Adolescents may have questions about puberty and its associated changes.</i> <i>Puberty can be supported by using credible sources, such as</i> • <i>Parents and caregivers</i> • <i>Health professionals</i> • <i>Counsellors</i> • <i>Spiritual leaders</i> • <i>Knowledge Keepers</i> • <i>Elders</i>	<i>Sources of support are available for adolescents during puberty.</i>	<i>Identify credible sources in the community to support individuals through the changes that occur during puberty.</i>
<i>Changes to hygiene practices include</i> • <i>Using deodorant or antiperspirant</i> • <i>Showering or bathing more frequently</i> • <i>Changing clothes regularly</i>	<i>Puberty can require changes in personal hygiene practices.</i>	<i>Identify how personal hygiene practices may need to be modified as the body changes.</i>



List of Contents & Speaker Notes

Alarm Clock

- Using an alarm clock can help people keep a regular schedule which:
 - Improves physical health
 - Improves mental health
 - Regulates mood swings
 - Helps people sleep better
 - Reminds people to do hygiene activities
 - Develops skills like time management and organization

Antiperspirant/Deodorant

- Changes to hormones and sweat glands in puberty can cause armpits to smell more
- In addition to daily washing, some people use deodorant or antiperspirant to manage this smell
- Deodorant absorbs or removes odor; antiperspirant stops sweat from coming out
- Check ingredient list for allergies or other concerns

Athletic Supporter

- Can protect the penis, testicles and pubic bone from injury during contact sports
- Can support and provide modesty for the penis and testicles during activity

Baby Wipes, Wet Wipes or Personal Wipes

- If someone isn't showering or bathing every day, they can use wipes every day to clean feet, bum, genital area, belly button, armpits and around the neck to manage increased sweat and changing body smell

Ball, Skipping Rope (or similar item or photo indicating active living)

- Getting an hour or so a day of physical activity like sports, walking and having fun with friends outside can:
 - Help people grow in healthy ways and stay healthy
 - Help people sleep better
 - Improve energy
 - Build feelings of belonging
 - Improve mental health
 - Regulate mood swings
 - Make periods more comfortable

Ball Cap

- In puberty, hair gets oilier and people sweat more so it's important to wash or change hats often to keep germs, dirt, sweat and oil away from the face and hair
- Hats give good protection from sun's heat and damaging rays



Box of Baking Soda (empty)

- Some people use baking soda:
 - instead of deodorant or antiperspirant to manage armpit smell
 - on the feet or in the shoes to manage foot smell
 - as a dry shampoo to manage oily hair

Bra (youth size)

- As breasts develop, people may wear a bra for comfort, modesty or support

Canada Food Guide (image of current version)

- Eating enough nutritious food and limiting foods in high sugar, salt and saturated fats can help people:
 - Grow in healthy ways
 - Look, feel and smell their best
 - Have better mental health
 - Regulate mood swings
 - Have more energy
 - Sleep better
 - Have more comfortable periods

Comb, Brush and/or Hair Pick

- Combing or brushing hair can help people look and feel their best and lets them manage, untangle and style their hair

Hand Sanitizer (empty bottle)

- Washing hands regularly is important to keeping yourself and others healthy
- Using soap and water is best; use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available
- Hand washing is especially important before and after eating, going to the bathroom, sneezing, coughing or touching the face
- Others may be more comfortable with you when they know you wash your hands

Hot Water Bottle

- Warmth can help with growing pains.
- Applied to the lower abdomen, it can help with menstrual cramps

Ibuprophen (empty bottle)

- Ibuprophen may help with growing pains and period cramps and heavy bleeding
- Ask a parent or guardian before taking any medication
- Never take more than the recommended amount for your age; this helps protect the kidneys and liver as they grow



Kidshelpphone Card (or local 24/7 youth support line)

- No one feels great all the time, but if someone feels very bad or feels bad more often than they feel good, it's important to talk to someone
- People to talk to include friends, parents/guardians, other family members, counsellors or other trusted adults like teachers or community leaders
- If someone feels like they don't have a trusted adult to talk to, they can call a support line like kidshelpphone

Laundry Soap (sample or small empty container)

- In puberty, body smells change from changing hormones, oil and sweat so it's important to wash all clothes often and to wear clean socks, underwear and shirts every day
- Wash bedding and pajama bottoms after nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)
- Wash underwear, bottoms and bedding in cold water if menstrual blood is on them
- Puberty can be a good age to learn how to do laundry where you live (washing machine, laundromat or sink)

Menstrual Hygiene Products (keep altogether or separately as fits your group)

- It's a good idea to keep menstrual supplies handy in a locker or bag
- Pads are usually available at school offices; sometimes tampons are too
- Choose unscented menstrual products
- Talk to family members to find out what types of menstrual products to use
- ***Never put pads or tampons in the toilet –even if the box says it's flushable***
- ***Always throw away disposable period products in the garbage***

Disposable Pantliners

- Thin, small pads that are put in the underwear to soak up vaginal discharge or a light flow of period blood as it leaves the vagina
- They usually have a sticky strip on the bottom to keep them in place

Disposable Pads

- Pads are put in the underwear to soak up period blood as it leaves the vagina
- They usually have a sticky strip on the bottom to keep them in place
- Some have wings –this is part of the pad that wraps around the underwear's leg openings which lowers the chance of leaking
- Change pads often (every 4 hours during the day or more often if they soak through; you can use them overnight but may need a bigger pad)



Reusable pads

- These pads are made out of cloth and are put in the underwear to soak up period blood as it leaves the vagina
- They have wings – this is part of the pad that wraps around the underwear's leg openings and snaps together to keep the pad in place and lower the chance of leaking
- Many have a removable inner lining you change so you don't have to change the whole pad as often
- Change pads or lining often (every 4 hours during the day or more if they soak through; you can use them overnight but may need a bigger pad)
- Rinse, but don't soak, in cold water as soon as possible after using; wash following the directions on the package
- At school, put used liners/pads in a sealable container or zip loc bag

Menstrual Cup AND Menstrual Disk

- Silicone or plastic funnel or disk shaped cup put into the vagina which collects period blood as it leaves the uterus
- Comes in a variety of sizes and can be used by people of any age
- Put it in by folding it up and aiming it towards the bottom of the tailbone - follow instruction on the package or product website for more details about how to put it in and how to keep it clean
- Can stay in for up to 12 hours but may need to be changed more often if it leaks
- To empty the cup, squeeze the bottom of it, pull it out by the handle and dump the blood into the toilet; rinse it with clean water then put it back in
- If you're using it at school, be sure to carry your water bottle into the stall so you can rinse it there

Menstrual Underwear

- Washable underwear specially made to soak up period blood
- You just put it on like regular underwear
- Comes in a variety of sizes, styles and absorbency (how heavy of period it is for)
- If you choose the right absorbency for your period, you might only need to change it once in the morning and once at night
- Rinse, but don't soak, in cold water as soon as possible after use
- Follow the instructions on the product package to learn how to wash menstrual underwear – usually you either wash it right away or let it dry (instead of throwing it in the laundry hamper)



Tampons

- Absorbent products put inside the vagina to soak up period blood before it leaves the vagina
- Most come with a plastic or cardboard applicator; the plunger on some applicators may need to be pulled out a bit before it works
- Put the tampon into the vagina as far back as it comfortably goes, aiming towards the bottom of the tailbone; push the plunger (the tampon will go in); remove the applicator
- Tampons have a string attached to them; pulling this pulls out the tampon
- Use the lowest absorbency needed; if the tampon is still somewhat dry after 3 or 4 hours, use a lighter absorbency
- It's important to follow the instructions carefully to learn how often to change it because leaving it in too long can cause Toxic Shock Syndrome, a rare but serious infection
- Most tampons can be left in up to 4 hours; some (but not all) tampons can be left in for up to 8 hours at night – follow the instructions on the box
- Wrap used tampons in toilet paper and throw away in the garbage (not toilet)

Nail Clippers (in a sealed bag to keep students from using)

- Keeping nails trimmed:
 - makes it easier to wash bacteria away; this helps people stay healthy
 - keeps people from scratching themselves or others
 - makes hang nails less likely which can reduce infection
 - shows you take care of yourself which can make people more comfortable
- Never share nail clippers, even with close family members

Photo of Locked Cell Phone that says “Limit Screen Time”

- Limiting screen time and social media time can:
 - Help people stay active and be physically healthy
 - Improve mental health
 - Regulate mood swings
 - Help people sleep better
 - Help people get along better with others
- Being careful about digital privacy helps people stay safe
- Anytime something happens online that makes someone feel bad, it's very important to tell a trusted adult, even if they think they'll get in trouble



Razor (guard glued on OR electric razor)

- Body, pubic and armpit hair changes during puberty
- Some people choose to remove it, others don't
- Talking to family members can help people know if, why and how body hair is removed in their family
- Never share razors, even with close family members

Running Shoe

- Sweat and hormone changes can make feet smell unpleasant
- It is important to stay active, even if feet sweat and smell
- Washing or changing shoes or shoe liners when they begin to smell can help manage this changing smell

Shampoo

- People use shampoo to clean away the oil, sweat and dirt from their hair
- Some people wash their hair every day or two; others wash it less often
- Washing hair too often can make the body make even more oil, can make the hair dry and brittle and can irritate the scalp

Shaving Foam, Cream or Gel (avoid aerosol cans)

- For people who choose to remove body hair by shaving, shaving with moisture:
 - Feels better
 - Lowers the risk of razor burn and skin irritation
 - Makes cutting the skin less likely
- Some people use foam, cream, gel or just soap and water

Sleep Mask

- Getting enough sleep can:
 - Help people look and feel their best and grow in healthy ways
 - Improve mental health
 - Regulate mood swings
 - Improve energy
 - Make periods more comfortable
- During early puberty, the body needs 9-11 hours of sleep; as teens get older, *some* may only need 8-10 hours
- Hormone and relationship changes in puberty can make sleeping more difficult
- Using tools like sleep masks and having a regular routine can help people get enough regular sleep



Soap/Shower Gel

- Use water and soap or shower gel every day to wash away dirt, oil and sweat from the body (especially face, armpits, bum, genitals and feet)
- Use mild and unscented soap/shower gel because scented and strong soaps can cause irritation, dry skin and oily skin

Socks

- Sweat and hormone changes can make feet smell unpleasant
- Wearing clean socks every day can help manage this changing smell
- People may need to talk to a trusted adult to make sure they have enough socks

Tissues

- It can be helpful to keep tissues handy to sneeze or cough into
- It's important to throw tissues away and wash hands after use

Toothbrush, Toothpaste and Dental Floss (in a baggie)

- Hormone and eating habit changes can make cavities more likely in puberty
- People often get busier in puberty and are more likely to forget to brush and floss
- It's important to brush and floss teeth at least twice a day
- Be careful not to brush too hard
- Remember to also brush the tongue, gums and inside the cheeks
- If possible, visit the dentist once or twice a year for check ups
- Cleaning teeth helps people stay healthy, look and feel their best and get along with others

T-shirt (cotton or other natural fibre)

- To manage changing body smells from the hormone, oil and sweat changes in puberty, people wear clean shirts every day
- People may need to talk to a trusted adult to make sure they have enough shirts
- Choosing natural fibers like cotton, linen and bamboo may be more comfortable and allows air flow near the skin so bacteria is less likely to build up

Undershirt (cotton or other natural fibre)

- Everyone gets some breast development in puberty, but not everyone wears a bra
- As breasts develop during puberty, people may wear a supportive undershirt for comfort, modesty or support



Underwear (boxer style AND brief or panty style; cotton or other natural fibre)

- To manage changing body smells from hormone, oil, sweat and discharge changes in puberty, people wear clean underwear every day
- People may need to talk to a trusted adult to make sure they have enough underwear
- Choosing natural fibers like cotton, linen and bamboo may be more comfortable and allows air flow and keeps moisture away which lowers risk of infection
- Underwear should be comfortably loose to allow testicles to move closer or further from the body, which regulates temperature and helps make healthy sperm

Washcloth

- A clean washcloth with warm water and, if wanted, mild soap, can be used twice a day to wash away dirt, oil and sweat from the face and body
- Other skin care products are usually not needed unless parents or doctor says

Water Bottle

- Drinking water can help:
 - people look and feel their best
 - people stay physically healthy
 - skin stay healthy
 - make periods more comfortable
- Water is important especially during physical activity and hot weather
- Plain water is the easiest, the least expensive and doesn't cause cavities
- Drinking a lot of sodas, juices or artificially sweetened drinks can cause problems
- Energy drinks are not safe for people in puberty; they can hurt how the body and mind work and can get in the way of healthy development
- Sharing water bottles can spread germs - do not share water bottles with others



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