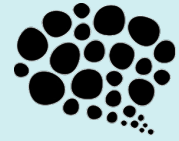


Lesson 1:

Understanding My Body



Learner Outcomes

Students will:

- Develop language to describe “private” body parts (e.g., genitals, breasts) in preparation for upcoming classes
- Identify body parts, including those of the reproductive systems
- Describe how some body parts are private
- Identify when it is safe to talk about private body parts

These outcomes are related to the Alberta curriculum sexuality outcomes and **require parental notification**.

This lesson is related to the PE&W Learning Outcomes

Grade 4: Students explain how development and puberty are connected.

Grade 5: Students connect puberty to the capacity for human reproduction.

How To Use

Teachers and staff know their students best: Before teaching this lesson, consider the individual goals of each student. The overall aim is for students to be healthy and safe while having the best personal and social experiences possible. Avoid assuming that a student doesn't need or want this information.

All the Differing Abilities (DA) lesson plans can be adapted to the needs of individual students and groups. The lessons are scripted, meaning there are answers and explanations for every question asked. The questions, answers and discussion points are prepared for you using plain and simple language at a level best suited to students with DA.

Text in italics is the script designed to be read directly to students. Possible answers to questions, activity instructions and other teacher information, are not in italics.

Classroom Activities

- A. Group Agreements and Check-in
- B. Introduction to Body Parts
- C. Naming Body Parts
- D. My Body Q&A
- E. Question Box
- F. Closure

Required Materials

Body Parts handout (below)

[DA Diagrams](#) – Body Parts and External Genitals

My Body Q&A cards (below)

Background Information for Teachers

The [goal of sexuality education](#) is to support students to:

- build knowledge, skills, and attitudes to lead sexually healthy lives.
- explore values consistent with physical, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.
- identify strategies to talk about sexuality and access natural supports (e.g., parents) and community supports (e.g., healthcare providers) as needed.

Language and terms

Talking about anatomy, physiology, and sexual development in terms of people, parts and processes is more accurate than talking about it in terms of assigned sex (female and male) or gender identity (girl and boy). For example, not everyone who gets periods is a girl, so saying “when someone gets their period” is more accurate than saying “when a girl gets her period.” This also helps make sure that everyone is included in the discussion, including trans, nonbinary and intersex youth.

However, some students may find this language confusing and will benefit from using gendered terms more frequently e.g., “when a girl gets her period, she may choose to use period underwear”. It’s important for

students to be clear about what may happen to them and saying people who get periods may be too abstract, resulting in confusion. Terms can be used together when explaining concepts e.g., “when someone is first starting to get their period, it may be irregular. Not all girls have a regular period at first.”

Students may have questions about their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). Teachers play an important role in helping students feel seen and affirmed when they come to school so that they feel good about their gender expression and identities. These lessons use inclusive language and acknowledge different identities and relationships to acknowledge all students as they develop their sexuality. Learn more about [gender identity and expression](#).

This lesson contains information mostly about body parts that are visible on the outside of the body. Internal reproductive systems are discussed in the Reproduction, Pregnancy and Birth lesson.

For detailed background information about the reproductive systems, see the Grade 5 lesson plans [Journey of an Egg](#) and [Journey of a Sperm](#).

A. Group Agreements and Check-in

Ensure [group agreements](#) (ground rules) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established group agreements, quickly reviewing them can help ensure a successful lesson.

Start with a check-in activity as appropriate for the group. You may want to answer the question box questions from the last class as part of the check-in.

B. Introduction to Body Parts

Introduce the ideas of private, public, body parts and their anatomical names by leading this group discussion with your students.

1. *Today, we are going to start learning about bodies. How does this make you feel?*
2. *Learning about your body will help you understand how special your body is. Think about all of the ways your body is special. How is your body special?*

e.g., how it feels, how it looks, what it can do, what you can't do with it

3. *Puberty is when someone grows from a child to an adult. Most people start going through puberty between 9 and 16 years old. Puberty includes body changes. Learning about your body can help you understand some of the changes that happen to it. What are some of the changes that you may have seen happening to your body?*
Getting taller, body odour, oily hair and skin, underarm hair, hair on private parts/genitals
4. *Learning about your body can help you know more about being private. What does private mean?*
Private means only for us. Some body parts are private and some things we only do in private, like taking a shower, adjusting our underwear, touching our genitals.
5. *We're going to talk more about private and public in another class (link to lesson 4: Bodies, Spaces and Behaviours lesson). It's important that we use the science words when we talk about private body parts. We'll learn those names so you can talk to a doctor or your family when you need to. It's ok if you feel uncomfortable when you say these words. It gets easier with practice.*

C. Naming Body Parts

Learning about body parts is a protective factor for students, even if they are unable to say, spell or remember the words. It builds the foundation for understanding that no one can touch their private body without permission. Children who know accurate terms for body parts are more likely to report inappropriate touch.

It's important to acknowledge that some people have bodies that aren't exactly like what we learn in school and that's ok.

Students might use slang words for body parts. You can repeat the slang, say the 'science word' and then continue using accurate terms. Students may giggle when they start to use body part names. That's okay and will decrease with comfort.

1. *For this activity, we'll imagine that the bodies are naked so that we can see their private body areas. This might feel strange, but this is a safe space to learn about bodies.*
2. *Just like scientists, we are using drawings to understand how the body works. We have lots of important body parts like our feet, our face, our shoulders. Today, we are going to talk about private body parts.*

See the Teacher Background Information about the use of inclusive language and gendered terms to best meet student needs.

3. Use the **Body Parts handout** or display the **Body Parts slide** from the [DA Diagrams](#) on the board. Ask students to help you draw and label the following on the outlines (see completed diagrams in the [DA Diagrams](#) for guidance). You may consider including a few other body parts like face, shoulder and foot – but be sure that the focus is on private body parts.
 - Belly button
 - Breasts
 - Genitals
 - Penis
 - Pubic hair
 - Scrotum
 - Vulva
4. *When a baby is born, a doctor says if the baby is female (girl) or male (boy) based on what their genitals look like - do they have a penis and testicles? If so, the doctor says they are a boy. Do they have a vagina and vulva? If so, the doctor says they are a girl.*
5. Use the **External Genitals** slide to show more details and label additional body parts not visible on the Body Parts diagrams.
 - Anus
 - Testicles
 - Labia
 - Clitoris
 - Vagina
 - Urethra (not part of the reproductive system but helpful for students to understand that the vaginal opening and urethral opening are two different parts).

Body Parts Descriptions

Anus: *This is the opening at the end of the digestive tract where poop leaves the body. It's not part of the reproductive system but is still private. It's part of the digestive system.*

Belly button: *Everyone has a belly button. It's how babies get food when they're still growing inside their mother.*

Breasts: Breasts are the soft part of the chest. Everyone has breasts, and they might hurt a little as you grow. This usually goes away. For girls, their breast size and shape will change during puberty. It's common for one breast to be a different size or shape from the other.

Genitals/genital area: *This is another name for the penis and testicles or the vulva, and the area around them.*

Penis: *External/on the outside sex organ. It can get harder when someone has sexual feelings. Semen and urine come out of the urethra, the tube in the penis. The penis grows during puberty.*

Testicles/scrotum: *Testicles are round sex organs held in the sac of skin called the scrotum. They're on the outside of the body so they can be kept cool. Testicles make sperm cells once puberty starts.*

Vulva: *The area around the opening of the vagina (labia, urethra and clitoris).*

Vagina: *The passageway that goes from the uterus to the outside of the body. The vagina is inside the body. The vaginal opening/hole is the part you notice from the outside.*

Pubic hair: *Hair in the genital area. It may be a different colour and feel thicker than hair on the head. There is no medical reason to remove pubic hair. Some people remove pubic hair and some don't; it's a personal choice.*

D. My Body Q&A

As students grow up, they often have questions about their bodies. Seeing questions that other students might have had can help them learn that it's normal to have questions about their own body and changes and that it's ok to ask questions.

1. Before the lesson, print and cut out the **My Body Q & A** question card and place them in a box or hat.
2. *Every person's body is unique – our weight, height, hair colour, skin tone, and how our bodies move are all different. Private parts/genitals are all different, too.*
3. *Everyone has questions about their body. This activity will show some questions students have about their body. Looking at other students' questions can help you learn to talk about your body.*
4. Invite each student to take a question. Either the student, you or another staff, reads the question aloud to the group.
5. Ask students how they would answer this question. What ideas do they have? Any comments about the question?
6. Add to the student's answers to the question, using the key below. Be sure to correct any myths or misinformation, while you reassure, normalize and provide quality information.

Answers

“I’m worried my penis is too small. How big should my penis be?”

Lots of people have questions about penis size. Everyone is different and there is not one size a penis “should” be. The penis keeps growing during puberty.

“I’m not circumcised. Is that OK?”

Circumcised means that the foreskin was removed from a penis. The foreskin is the skin and tissue that folds up over the head of a soft penis. It’s ok to be circumcised and it’s ok not to be circumcised. To take care of an uncircumcised penis, gently pull back the foreskin a little bit and wash around the head of the penis every day.

“I have been getting a lot of erections lately, even at school. Is this normal?”

An erection is when a penis gets hard. Lots of people get erections, even at school. Erections go away on their own, but staying calm and thinking about something else can help them go away faster. Long shirts or baggy pants can hide erections. Sitting down can also hide an erection and help it go away.

“I am worried because my left testicle hangs lower than the right testicle. Am I normal?”

Bodies are not exactly the same on each side. It’s ok if one testicle is lower than the other. Anytime you are worried about your body, it is a good idea to talk with a trusted adult like a parent, guardian or health care provider.

“I think my left testicle is bigger than the right. Am I normal?”

Bodies are not exactly the same on each side. It’s ok if one testicle is bigger than the other. If you notice one testicle growing and the other one is not growing, talk to a parent and the doctor.

“I’m 15. When will my breasts grow?”

Many people wonder about when their breasts will grow, but there isn’t a set time when they will start to grow. Everyone is different. Everyone gets some breast growth in puberty, usually between 9 and 16 years old. For boys, breast changes usually don’t last. For girls, breast size and shape changes stay.

“I have one breast larger than the other. Is this OK?”

Bodies are not exactly the same on each side. It's ok if one breast is bigger than the other. Sometimes one breast grows faster or larger. Usually other people can't tell if your breasts are different sizes.

“What if my head hair is one color but body hair is another color?”

Some people have different body and head hair colour and body and head hair colour that are the same. Both are normal.

“I want to know what to do if I get zits?”

Zits are also called pimples, blackheads, whiteheads or acne. Most people get some zits during puberty. If there are lots of zits or they hurt, talk to a parent, guardian or health care provider. To help your skin be healthy, wash your face and body with a cloth, using water and a mild unscented soap.

“I am 14 and my voice changed but I'm not sure I'm going through puberty. Is that ok?”

When someone notices that their voice is getting deeper, richer and fuller, it is a sign that they've started puberty. They can expect more puberty changes to come over the next few months and years.

“I have hair on my armpits and legs. Should I shave?”

Some people choose to remove their leg and underarm hair by shaving or using special creams or waxes. Some people choose not to. You can talk to a parent about what might be right for you.

“I'm a boy and my breasts are growing a bit. What happens if a boy gets breasts in puberty?”

Puberty hormones cause everyone to get some breast development in puberty. Some boys have breast swelling, hardness or tenderness. For boys, breast changes usually go away by the time puberty is over.

“I think I might smell bad. What should I do?”

Most people smell different once they are in puberty. This is because of hormones and more sweat and oil glands. To help:

- *Wash your feet, genital and bum area, and armpits every day with unscented soap and water.*
- *Wear clean socks, underwear and shirts every day.*
- *Wash your hair and the rest of your body when you get very sweaty, oily or dirty.*

- *Use deodorant or antiperspirant on armpits. Ask your family if that is right for you.*

E. Question Box

Answer any questions from [question box](#) in the previous lesson. Have students submit any new questions and address them next class.

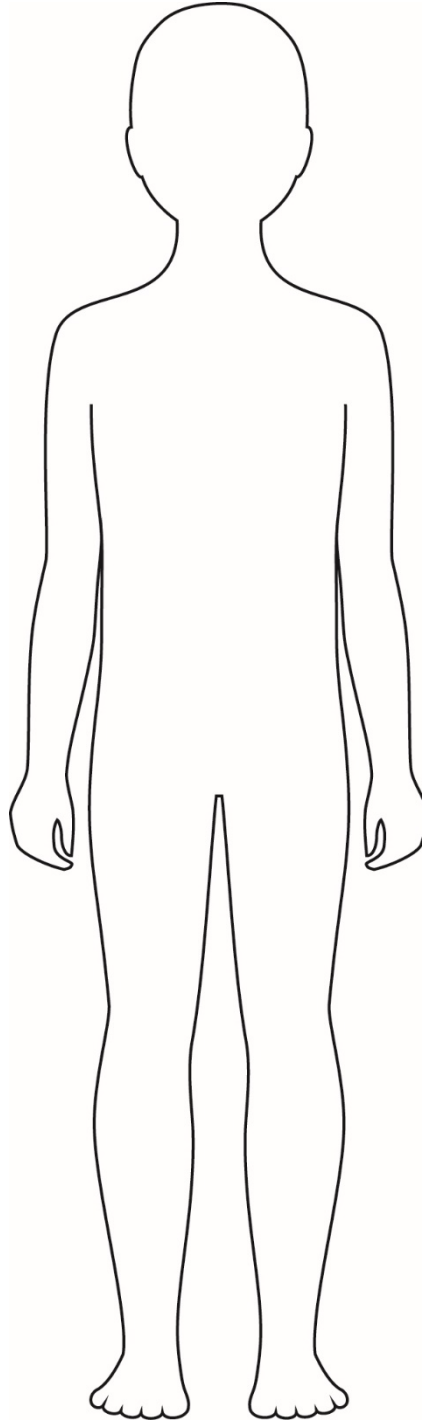
- Some students may need assistance from staff, either during the class or in between classes, to record their questions.
- Hand out paper to each student.
 - Students who don't have a question can write something else on the piece of paper, such as something they learned or just a comment about their day.
 - When everyone writes something down, the people with questions feel safer writing them.
- Use a box or bag to collect the papers.
- Addressing the questions at the next class allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

F. Closure

1. *We talked about bodies today - how do you feel after talking about bodies?*
2. *Who can you talk to about what we've learned today?*
Include yourself and other classroom staff in the list. You may need to remind students not to share what they learned with younger students.
3. *We talked about private body parts today - what can you do if someone touches your private body parts without your permission?*
Talk to a trusted adult like a parent, teacher or doctor— we'll talk more about this in an upcoming session.
4. *Next class we will talk about some more changes that can happen to our body, feelings and relationships and how we can take care of ourselves.*

Name: _____

Body Parts





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I'm 15. When will my breasts grow?

I have one breast larger than the other. Is this OK?

What if my head hair is one color but my body hair is another color?



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I am 14 and my voice changed but I'm not sure I'm going through puberty. Is that ok?

I have hair on my armpits and legs. Should I shave?

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I think I might I smell bad. What should I do?



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