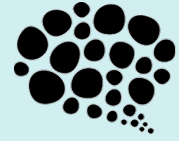


Lesson 3:

Hygiene: Taking Care of My Body



Learner Outcomes

Students will:

- Identify reasons to take care of personal hygiene
- Describe hygiene routines
- Identify personal hygiene items to use daily
- Identify skills and tools required to manage body changes and processes e.g., menstruation, nocturnal emissions

The last one is related to the Alberta curriculum sexuality outcomes and **requires parental notification**.

This lesson is related to the PE&W Learning Outcome

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

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 Hygiene

- C. Puberty Kit Activity
- D. My Routine for Taking Care of Me
- E. Managing Self Care
- F. Visiting Healthcare Providers
- G. Question Box
- H. Closure

Required Materials

[Puberty Kit](#)

Background Information for Teachers

Knowing what will happen during puberty is the first step towards adapting well to adolescence. Learning about bodies and growing up can help students stay healthy, take good care of themselves and make good decisions.

Developing positive coping strategies and self-confidence is essential to adolescent development. Discussions around the emotional changes of puberty, like mood swings, can be embedded into various other lessons that discuss feelings and strategies to deal with stress and change. Sharing about ourselves is a good way to encourage self-confidence. Accepting and embracing the change that comes with growing up involves knowing oneself and making a personal plan for the future.

Some students in your class may need extra support during puberty. Before puberty, children's bodies don't have publicly visible differences based on assigned sex. Puberty changes can make gender expression and self-acceptance more challenging for everyone, especially trans or nonbinary youth. All youth need support accessing the services they need to feel great about, and take care of their body.

Students of all genders should learn about sexual health together. When students learn together, they gain a greater understanding and respect for different perspectives and experiences. This can promote empathy and reduce the potential for teasing, stigma and discrimination.

For more on keeping students of all genders together, see [Instructional Methods](#).

For more on teaching sexual health education, see [Teaching Human Sexuality to Students with Differing Abilities](#).

Language and terms

Talking about anatomy, physiology, and sexual development in terms of people, parts and processes is more accurate and clearer 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](#).

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 Hygiene

Acknowledge that this may be a review for high school students. Adapt based on students’ prior knowledge.

Some students may not be aware that looking and smelling good are considered positive social assets. Also, when students learn self-care skills,

they have some control over how they look and feel, which can raise self-esteem. Some students may be unable to adopt these practices due to lack of support or access (e.g., to laundry facilities). It is important not to stigmatize or shame students because of their abilities or circumstances.

Use the prompts below to lead a class discussion.

- 1. Last class, we talked about growing up and puberty.*
If students have baby photos to show after the last lesson, make some time to acknowledge them.
- 2. Today, we're going to learn about how to take care of your body as it changes. Remind me, what are some 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
- 3. These changes are part of growing up. Some of these body changes mean that it is more important to take care of how your body looks and feels.*
- 4. 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, looks etc.
- 5. We can take care of our body with hygiene. What does hygiene mean?*
What we do to stay healthy and not get sick e.g., brushing teeth helps stop cavities and gum disease
- 6. Hygiene helps us get along with others*
e.g., brushing teeth helps so when we talk to people, we don't have bad breath. People like it when we look and smell good!
- 7. Some people need help with hygiene, to take care of their body including showering, hair care and teeth cleaning. Receiving personal care doesn't mean that the person has no control. As you grow older, you can learn ways to talk with your carers about making your own choices and decisions about when to get care, products to use and your personal style. Today we'll learn about things we can do every day to have good hygiene to help us feel good.*

C. Puberty Kit Activity

Teachers in some areas of the province may be able to borrow a pre-made puberty kit from the school, school board or school nurse. Using this hands-on tool enhances learning and familiarity by using sight and touch. Kits

include teaching aids and a description of what to say about each item. If a kit is not available, you can assemble your own by following the list of items in the [Puberty Kit](#), or print and laminate the pictures from the kit.

There are several ways the Puberty Kit can be used to enable students to interact with the items. Choose the ones that best meet the needs and abilities of your students.

Talk about the values associated with the beauty industry. Many items people use aren't necessary for hygiene and health and can be expensive.

1. Give an item to individual students or pairs or pass items around so everyone gets to touch them and ask the following questions:
 - *What is the item?*
 - *How is it used?*
 - *Why is it important to use?*
 - *How does it relate to body changes?*
 - *How often is the item used? Daily, few times a week, monthly?*
 - *Is the item expensive?*
2. If it is not safe or appropriate to pass the items around, hold the items up at the front of the class while you ask questions and discuss answers.
3. Use the Puberty Changes Cards from [Lesson 2 Puberty](#) and match the item to the puberty change - e.g., oily hair - the class can find items from the kit to help with that change (shampoo)

For each method, debrief the activity:

- *How can the items help you feel good about growing up?*
Growing up can be exciting and frightening and looking after yourself can help manage feelings.
- *Where can someone get the items? Who should someone talk to about getting them?*
Stores, parents, school (e.g., pads), support workers

D. My Routine for Taking Care of Me

For students who require guidance and support to establish hygiene routines. This activity works well as a digital activity and could be adapted for student devices.

Before the start of this class:

1. Create a large, blank chart with the days of the week at the top. You will use this to show an example to the class. This can be used to check off each day hygiene tasks are completed.

2. Create a set of large photos, pictures, icons or symbols to place along the side of the chart (e.g., hair brush, tooth brush, face cloth). The [Puberty Kit](#) has many of these photos.
3. Create an individual blank chart for each student identical to the large chart as well as sets of smaller photos, pictures, icons or symbols for each student to use on their individual chart.
4. *We are going to make a hygiene routine chart to help us remember what we have to do.*
5. *What have you done today to take care of your hygiene?*
Brushed teeth, brushed hair, used deodorant, washed face etc.
6. *What do we need to do every day for personal hygiene?*
Shower, bath or wash certain body areas (genitals, bum, feet, and armpits), wash face, clean and floss teeth, wear clean shirts, underwear and socks, brush hair etc.

Include items like getting enough sleep, waking up with time to get ready, and eating breakfast.
7. Add these items to the chart using pictures.
8. Adapt to individual circumstances.
 - e.g., some bathe in the evening, as there is not enough time as part of the morning routine. In some families, people don't bathe or shower daily.
9. Place the chart in the student's agenda for use at home or keep at school to review at morning check-in. If a student is having challenges with personal hygiene, this routine chart can provide a good starting point and strategy for discussions with family and caregivers.
10. Learning healthy habits takes time and support. Some students will need lots of reminders. Youth who can perform daily hygiene tasks without support, if possible, are more independent and at less risk for abuse.

E. Managing Self Care

Some types of self-care are based on specific body parts and processes. In most cases, every student can learn about what happens to all bodies, even if the process does not happen to them. Some students with particular learning needs may find this too confusing and may need to only know

about what will happen for them e.g., menstruation or wet dreams. Adapt as needed for your group. This may include responding to challenging behaviours when students will need to be reminded of privacy and boundaries.

Use items or pictures from the [Puberty Kit](#), the **Puberty Changes cards** from [Lesson 2 Puberty](#), and student questions, to address each of these elements of self care.

- **Circumcision** *is when the flap of skin (foreskin) covering the penis is removed. If uncircumcised, the foreskin should be gently pushed back to clean around the penis during bathing or showering.*
- **Erections:** *Usually, the penis is soft and hangs down, but sometimes the penis gets hard – this is an erection. Erections are a typical part of growing up but can be embarrassing. They often happen for no reason at all. Erections are private. What could someone do if they get an erection in public?*
 - go to the washroom to adjust the penis in private; sit down so the erection is less noticeable; cover the area with a coat or sweater.
- **Wet dreams** (nocturnal emissions) *may start to happen during puberty. They are when an erection happens when sleeping and a small amount of semen is released, leaving a small amount of sticky, white fluid on the bedding or pajamas. Wet dreams are private. What could someone do if they wake up and find that they have had a wet dream?*
 - Wipe off, change pajamas/underwear and place them in the laundry.
- **Menstruation** (periods) *is when a small amount of blood comes out through the vagina for about 4-5 days. They are a normal part of puberty for most girls. Periods are not an injury. The uterus has a lining of blood that builds up every month to get ready for a baby. When there is no pregnancy, the blood comes out because it is not needed. Periods are private but you may want to talk to a parent or trusted adult about how to manage periods.*
 - *What do people sometimes call a period?* Your ‘monthly’; your ‘cycle’; that time of the month.
 - *Who has seen TV ads about periods?* Maybe you’ve seen commercials for pads and tampons. These are used to protect underwear from the blood. They should be changed regularly when someone is having their period.
 - *What do people do when they have their period?* Use the menstrual supplies from the puberty kit to show the group; explain that there are different sizes
 - Pads and tampons should be thrown in the garbage after use (not down the toilet)

- Period underwear and reusable pads should be changed regularly and laundered
- It's important to follow cleaning instructions on menstrual cups.
- *What should someone do if they start their period at school and don't have any supplies? Go to the school office or talk to their teacher who can help them*
- *Cramps sometimes happen before or during periods. Gentle exercise and stretching, a heated pad or a warm bath can help. Only take pain medication if a parent or caregiver helps you.*
- **Body hair and shaving** *Growing hair in the genital area, armpits, legs and face are part of puberty.*
 - Keeping or removing body hair is a choice.
 - For safety, people can start shaving with an electric razor before moving on to a razor and gel/cream.
 - Wash underarms daily whether or not you shave.
 - Leg hair removal is common for women but is not required and is not the same in all cultures.
 - Pubic hair helps regulate body temperature and protects the genitals. It's not medically necessary to remove pubic hair. Be very careful if you decide to remove hair from your private parts as the skin is very delicate.
 - *How does the media show body hair?* Media images often show very little body hair, emphasizing stereotypes of hair free people.

F. Visiting Healthcare Providers

This is a group discussion for older students. It is important to encourage students to advocate for their health even if attending healthcare alone may be beyond their capabilities. Although some students may never be considered a mature minor, they should know they can speak privately with a healthcare professional.

Help students identify any specific community clinics that they can visit e.g., a youth clinic

1. *Part of growing up is learning how to take care of your body with checkups and where to go if you have a health problem.*
2. *Why is it important to get checkups? Just a like a car, bodies run best when they are healthy and everything is working. A checkup can include talking about any medical problems you have now but also any worries you have about your health, including your sexual health e.g., your periods, voice changes*

3. *Sometimes people put off going for check-ups like the doctor or dentist. Why? People think their problem will go away by itself (when it could get worse if left); they are worried about what they might hear (most health problems can be treated); they are embarrassed to talk about their body, especially when it is about sexuality.*
4. *You don't need to be a certain age to visit the doctor or healthcare; you don't need parental consent/permission although many people your age still visit healthcare with their parents, and some people will need extra help.*
5. *You can visit a family doctor, walk-in clinic or Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinic.*
6. *Do you know what an Alberta Health Care Card is? Everyone has a number just for them. If your parents have it, take a photo or decide if it's time for you to hold on to it. You can visit health care without your card, you will still get care.*
7. *Your privacy is protected. Anything you share with the doctor is private (unless you are at risk of harm); your parents can't call a clinic and find out if you've attended.*
8. *You can bring a support person with you; you can ask questions; you can say no to any treatment or medication.*

G. 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.

- Answer the questions during the **next class**. This allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

H.Closure

- *We talked about hygiene and taking care of our bodies as we change - how do you feel after talking about hygiene?*
- *Who can you talk to about what we've learned today?*
- *In another class, we'll start to talk about private and public bodies and spaces.*



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