

Grade 4

Coping with Puberty



Learner Outcome

Students explain how development and puberty are connected.

The [Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills and Procedures](#) for this outcome that are covered in this lesson are listed at the end.

How To Use

This lesson plan contains several activities to achieve the learner outcome above. You may choose to do some or all of the activities, based on the needs of your students and the time available. Some of the activities build on the ones that come before them, but all can be used as stand-alone activities.

For a quick lesson, combine activities A, B and H.

Classroom Activities & Timing

See also the [Differing Abilities](#) lesson plan on Puberty.

- A. Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)
- B. Puberty Kit Discussion (20-30 minutes)
- C. Then, Now and Beyond Worksheet (20-30 minutes)
- D. The Me to Be Collage (30-45 minutes)
- E. Celebrating Growing Up
- F. Puberty Changes Kahoot! Quiz (15-20 minutes)
- G. Advice Corner Interview
- H. Question Box (5-10 minutes)

Required Materials

[Puberty Kit](#)

HANDOUT: Then, Now and Beyond

[KAHOOT! QUIZ](#) and ANSWER KEY: Puberty Changes

HANDOUT: Advice Corner

All the student handouts are also available in the [Grade 4 Workbook](#).

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 to 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 PE and Wellness 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.

Inclusive Language

Language is complex, evolving, and powerful. In these lessons, [inclusive language](#) is used to be inclusive of all students, including those with diverse gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations. This includes the use of 'they' as a singular gender-neutral pronoun.

A person's sex can be assigned at birth as male or female. Some people are intersex (the reproductive, sexual, or genetic biology of a person is unclear, not exclusively male or female or otherwise does not fit within traditional definitions of male or female). Assigned sex is independent of gender.

Gender identity is a person's internal sense of identity as girl/woman, boy/man, fluid among genders or no gender (regardless of what sex they were assigned at birth).

For many people, their gender is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth (cisgender). For others, their gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. They may use terms like transgender, trans, non-binary, gender fluid, gender queer, agender or others, to describe their gender identity. The umbrella term 'trans' is primarily used here, to describe people whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth differ. While this umbrella term does not fit everyone, the intention is to be as inclusive as possible.

A. Ground Rules

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

B. Puberty Kit

This activity encourages students to identify tools they can use to help with some of the more challenging aspects of puberty.

There are three options for obtaining the tools needed to teach this activity:

- Buy or collect items to make a puberty kit using the [list of materials](#). The kit can typically be assembled for around \$20 using items from a dollar store/thrift store and can be re-used every year and shared between classes/teachers.
- Print a copy of the [pictorial Puberty Kit](#). Consider laminating the pages.
- Borrow a puberty kit for use in the classroom from your school nurse or zone sexual health education team. This option may not be available in your area.

Be familiar with the contents of the kit and the discussion points for each item, before beginning the activity. The complete list of items and explanations is included [here](#).

1. Pass out the items/pictures from the kit until all are distributed.
2. Give students a few minutes to discuss their item with their neighbour.
3. Ask one student to hold up their item or picture and share what they think the item has to do with puberty. Encourage them to guess if they are unsure. Encourage other members of the class to add their own ideas about the item.
4. Add any information still missing, clarify any incorrect information and answer questions about each item, before going on to the next item.

C. Then, Now and Beyond Worksheet

Students may need encouragement to see the positive aspects of puberty and growing up. Envisioning who they hope to be in the future is part of this process.

1. Distribute the handout **Then, Now and Beyond**.
2. Have students complete the handout individually. They may need some prompting about using their memories to complete the “Then” column and using their imagination to complete the “Beyond” column. In the “What I Look Like” category, encourage them to think broadly

and include aspects such as hairstyle, height, shoe size or favourite clothing.

3. When students are finished, have them share their answers with a partner or in a small group.
4. Debrief this activity by asking students:
 - What did you learn about yourself?
 - What do you like about the future you?
 - Who are the people that will be part of your support system in junior high/middle school?

D. The Me to Be Collage

Students will celebrate the person they will become during puberty.

1. The students will collect pictures and words that represent who they hope to be in grade 8 (when most of them will have at least begun going through puberty) and use them to make a collage. Emphasize to the students that they collect pictures about their hopes, goals, friends, activities, or skills, not just about how they might look.
2. If you completed the **Then, Now and Beyond** activity, students can use their answers as ideas for the pictures to collect.
3. You can choose to make collages out of magazine/newspaper pictures or use pictures found online.
4. If students are bringing pictures from home, have them make a list of what they need to remember to bring the next day.
5. When the students are finished, display the collages throughout the classroom with each student's permission.

E. Celebrating Growing Up

Many cultures have celebrations that recognize the transition into puberty or the transition into adulthood. You may wish to share a movie or story that describes the celebrations of some cultures as a way to begin the conversation.

1. Ask students if they know of any ceremonies or traditions their families celebrate, regarding puberty and moving from childhood to adulthood. Asking about these traditions in their family may be a good homework activity.

2. Have a brainstorming session as a class to come up with events, ceremonies, rituals or traditions that students would like to celebrate in their own lives, to mark puberty or the transition to adulthood.

F. Puberty Changes Kahoot! Quiz

This quiz can be a great review, wrap-up of the unit or a fun energizer in between other activities. For more information on using Kahoot!, visit kahoot.com

1. Open the Kahoot! Quiz: [Grade 4 Puberty Changes](#)
2. As a class, answer the quiz questions and discuss the answers together. You can play the quiz in individual or team mode.

G. Advice Corner Interview

Students use the knowledge they learned during the puberty kit activity to answer some difficult questions about coping with puberty.

1. Distribute the handout **Advice Corner**.
2. Have students complete step one in class.
3. Ask students to take the handout home and complete step two with any adult they trust, including a parent, grandparent, foster parent, older sibling, aunt, uncle, coach, or family friend.
4. Explain that this is not a graded assignment and there are no right or wrong answers.
5. Take time to debrief this activity next class with questions such as:
 - What did this activity teach you about puberty?
 - What are some other questions that young people might have about puberty? How can we answer them?

Keep in mind that not all students have equal opportunities for open discussion with family or other adults in their life.

Due to the sensitive nature of human sexuality topics, it is recommended that homework is reviewed or discussed but not graded.

H. Question Box

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

Addressing the questions at the next class allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

Self-Reflection

During the lesson, were:

- ground rules being followed?
- good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?

Learning Outcomes

This lesson addresses the following Grade 4 [Physical Education and Wellness curriculum](#) outcomes:

Knowledge

- Some cultures have different celebrations that recognize the transition into puberty.
- Adolescents may have questions about puberty and its associated changes.
- Puberty can be supported using credible sources, such as
 - parents or caregivers
 - health professionals
 - counsellors
 - spiritual leaders
 - Knowledge Keepers
 - Elders
- Changes to hygiene practices include
 - using deodorant or antiperspirant
 - showering or bathing more frequently
 - changing clothes regularly

Understanding

- Cultural traditions can mark the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Sources of support are available for adolescents during puberty.

- Puberty can require changes in personal hygiene practices.

Skills and Procedures

- Explore how transitions into puberty are acknowledged in different cultures.
- Recognize that First Nations, Métis, or Inuit entry into puberty can be accompanied by ceremony that supports the ongoing transition into adulthood.
- Identify credible sources in the community to support individuals through the changes that occur during puberty.
- Identify how personal hygiene practices may need to be modified as the body changes.

Then, Now and Beyond

Fill in the chart with information about yourself. Use your imagination to fill in what you think might be true for the grade 8 column.

| | Then (Grade 1) | Now (Grade 4) | Beyond (Grade 8) |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| The most important people in my life | | | |
| What I look like | | | |
| My favourite shows/movies | | | |
| My most prized possession | | | |
| How I behave | | | |
| My worst fear | | | |

Advice Corner

Now that you know more about puberty, you may find that your friends come to you for advice on all sorts of things. What will you tell your friends who ask the questions below?

1. Pick 3 questions you know the answer to. Write your answer in the space provided.
2. Interview a parent, guardian, or other supportive adult to find out how they would answer the rest of the questions. Write the adult's answers in the space provided.

I don't like my hair because it's too oily. What suggestions do you have?

Lately I am not getting along with my parents like I used to. What should I do?

I feel so bad - my friends told me that I stink after gym class. What can I do?

Name: _____

Sometimes I feel like I just don't fit in. What should I do?

I have lots of pimples on my face. What should I do about them?

Sometimes I feel happy and the next minute I feel angry. Why do I feel this way?

All my friends seem to be going through puberty already and I'm not. I feel left out, and I don't want to be treated like a little kid. What can I do?

ANSWER KEY: Grade 4 Puberty Changes Quiz

Correct answers are in bold text.

1. A physical change of puberty is:
 - Caring more about your appearance
 - **Growing taller**
 - Wanting to fit in
 - **Growing hair in new places**

Caring more about your appearance, and wanting to fit in, are emotional changes of puberty, not physical changes. All four are changes that can happen to anyone during puberty.

2. An emotional change of puberty is:
 - **Caring more about your appearance**
 - Growing taller
 - **Wanting to fit in**
 - Growing hair in new places

Growing taller, and growing hair in new places, are physical changes of puberty, not emotional changes. All four are changes that can happen to anyone during puberty.

3. What can you do about body odour?
 - **Use deodorant or antiperspirant**
 - **Shower or bathe every day**
 - Wear the same clothes all week
 - Nothing, just get used to being stinky

Washing clothes regularly and bathing more frequently are skills that may need to be learned.

4. Every boy has wet dreams every night during puberty.
 - True
 - **False**

Some people have frequent wet dreams, others do not. Wet dreams are when semen is ejaculated from the penis when the person is sleeping. Girls or people assigned female also might notice they release some fluid from the genitals when they are sleeping. People of any gender can have an orgasm while sleeping.

5. Sexual thoughts and feelings only start after puberty is done.
 - True
 - **False**

Sexual thoughts and feelings commonly begin during puberty.

6. If you get acne during puberty, it might help to:
- stop eating chocolate
 - **gently wash your face every day**
 - **use a soap, lotion or cream made to fight acne**
 - pop your pimples

There is no link between chocolate and acne. Gently washing (not scrubbing) the face once or twice a day, with a mild soap or cleanser, can help. Products that contain benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid are designed to reduce acne and are effective for many people. Popping pimples can make acne worse and lead to scarring.

7. Getting your period:
- means you are an adult now
 - **is one step in growing up**
 - means it is time to have a baby
 - **is nothing to be ashamed of**

Periods are normal and natural, and a part of growing up. Treating periods like something shameful or embarrassing is not healthy or helpful.

8. Feeling lonely and confused sometimes is common during puberty.
- **True**
 - False

It can be easy to focus on the physical changes of puberty, as they are so noticeable. But the emotional changes can be more stressful for many people, and they may need more support in navigating those changes.

9. Who grows shorter during puberty?
- Everyone
 - **No one**

Although some kids may wonder if they will ever grow, if they start puberty later than many of their friends, getting taller will eventually happen for everyone who goes through puberty.

10. Who becomes more interested in dating during puberty?
- Everyone
 - No one
 - **Some people**

Not everyone becomes interested in dating. For some people it may begin before puberty, for others after, or even never. For people who are interested, it is normal to be interested in dating people of any gender. Some people clearly know their sexual orientation at this age, and others do not.