ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE & Sexual Health

Puberty

Physical Changes

Emotional & Social Changes

Behavioural Changes

Menstruation

Mental hygiene for Boys & Girls

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DIRECTORATE OF
STATE COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING
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GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM
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What is Adolescence?

The word adolescence is derived from Latin term *adolescens* which means growing up or growing toward. It is a significant phase of transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence is generally defined with reference to a period between 13 and 18 years of age, while some of them put it between 10 – 19 years. Adolescence may be defined as the period of physical, psychological and social maturation from childhood to adulthood. The period extending from puberty to the attainment of full reproductive maturity.
**Puberty**

Puberty may be defined as a period in human life when the bodily and genital organs of an individual start developing very fast and in that process they reach their full development. It may at best be called a part of adolescence. Adolescence includes an individual’s physical, mental, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and all other developments. But puberty is mostly concerned with bodily development. In fact, puberty is the beginning of adolescence.

**Physical changes**

**Boys** usually begin to notice the following changes around ages of 12 – 14

- Growth in height
- Growth of pubic hair
- Deepening of voice
- Enlargement of sex organs
- Production sperms (wet dreams)
- Erect penis in the morning
- Growth of facial hair
- Pimples on the face

**Girls** usually begin to experience these changes around ages of 10 – 13

- Growth in height
- Growth of pubic hair
- Enlargement of breast
- Enlargement of sex organs
- Rounding of hips
- Onset of menstruation
- Pimples appear on face

**Social & Emotional Changes**

Social changes that adolescents experience include:

- Adolescents also develop socially in the following ways
- Develop interest in opposite sex
- Want to associate with friends outside the family
- Want impress their peers
- Develop interest in social activities such as sports, going out
+ Develop interest in certain vocations, career
+ Spend more time with peers
+ Involvement in risky behaviours
+ Breaking the rules and testing limits

Emotional changes that adolescents experience include:

+ Sensitivity about how you appear, body size, looks
+ Questioning authority and parents
+ Desire to have independence from parents
+ Sensitivity in how peers perceive you
+ Self-doubt and confusion about one’s identity
+ Feeling more attached to peers than family member
+ Joining of cliques and close group friendships
+ Interest in own sexuality
+ Increase in disagreements with parents
Behavioural changes

Adolescent reflect the following characteristics in their behaviour patterns:

a) **Independence:** Adolescents start distancing themselves from the adult world. They begin to shift from parents to peers, from existing to new belief systems. They tend to form sub-cultures to support their striving for independence.

b) **Identity:** Personal identity is the awareness one has of oneself as a consistently whole person. Adolescents tend to assert and take their own decisions about their needs, interest, abilities and vocations.

c) **Intimacy:** Adolescents suddenly discover their special interest in the opposite sex. Invariably they find it hard to distinguish between infatuation and love with or without sexual orientation.

d) **Peer group dependence:** In an effort to show their independence, adolescents tend to break away from the close emotionalities
of parents and prefer the company of their friends usually each gender group develop “homo-social” orientation and form gender-specific peer groups. While at home, they often prefer being alone and demonstrate their obstinate inclination for privacy. These developments promote their dependence on peer group, from which they derive approval and support for their changed behaviour pattern.

e) Intellect: The development of intellectual capacity in adolescents is also reflected through their behaviour. They become capable of conceptual thinking and understanding logic and deductive reasoning. All these result in the heightening of the self-esteem in them.

**Menstruation**

Menstruation is a natural phenomenon when a girl starts having menstruation. It means that her reproductive organs have been working. It is a development which is attributed to factors such as better nutrition and health status of girls
It is a normal function of a healthy female body. Age range may vary from 9 to 18 years.

**Mental Hygiene for both sexes**

Some measures to maintain hygiene for both sexes:

1. Take bath at least once a day, paying special attention to underarms, groins and genitals.
2. Boys should retract foreskin of the penis to remove cheesy and ill smelling substance on the glands of the penis.
3. Girls should separate the labia to wash vulva. Water from the anus should not drain towards vagina (opening for menstrual blood flow) and urethra (opening for urination) so as to avoid infection of these parts.
4. The underclothes should be made of cotton and should be changed daily.
5. Sanitary napkins (pads) or a pad made of clean, soft cloth which can absorb should be used for absorbing menstrual flow.
6. Sanitary napkins or cloth should be changed frequently depending upon the menstrual flow.

7. Wash the genital with soap and water before using a fresh napkin.
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