

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Boys & Girls**

- 1. During childhood I received a lot of love, affection and appreciation from every one -parents, relatives, etc. But things changed fast. When I entered my teens, less appreciation came in and the care I was getting was less. I started confiding less to my parents. This changed me entirely; I am now more arrogant and irresponsible and cannot concentrate on my studies. What do I do?**

These are the normal and usual changes that take place in teenage years. As you grow up, others attitudes as well as way of showing love and affection towards you will definitely change. When you are kid, you have the freedom to sit on your parents lap, but once you grow up, you won't try for that. You should try to accept and understand the changes and should develop a positive attitude towards it. Try and make a new beginning. Still if you find it difficult, you can discuss it with an elder person (aunty/uncle/ teacher/family doctor/school counselor) to whom you can confide.

- 2. Why is that when a child enters adolescence she or he is given less freedom? They are being constantly fired and questioned.**

Adolescence is a period of emotional instability with strong likes and dislikes as well as extreme affinity for peer groups with a high possibility of risk taking behavior. The adults who have understood that, gone through it are over anxious to make sure that the adolescent do not fall into any trap and hence they try to be over protective. You rightfully hate it now, but tomorrow you may behave the same way with your adolescent child.

- 3. My main problem is that I am highly irritable and aggressive. I get very angry when my parents advise me. My parents insist that I should secure the 1st rank. But I am quiet lazy.**

The best thing about you is that you have good understanding of your own problem; it is just that you refuse to take action. Being irritable and antagonistic to parental advice is part of your growing up. I am sure you will come out of it very soon. All parents do not have the tact to deal with adolescents. They openly show the dissatisfaction creating more irritability in you. As you yourself has said that you are lazy, best solution would be to try to overcome it, not necessarily for being 1st in the class but for doing your optimal best.

- 4. Exactly what are hormones?**

Proteins or steroids secreted directly into the bloodstream are called hormones. Many of your body's normal, everyday, functions are regulated by hormonal substances such as metabolism of minerals, regulation of fluids, your responses to stress, sexual function, reproduction, and pregnancy.

Glands such as the pituitary, hypothalamus, thyroid, parathyroid, pancreas, adrenal cortex and medulla, and ovaries make up the endocrine system that produces hormones in women. When there are breakdowns or malfunctions in the hormonal process, your body is drastically affected.

**5. I feel very bad when my parents or teachers scold me. But later I realize that it was my fault and I feel guilty.**

All of us feel bad when somebody points out our mistake and even worse if they scold us. But as we grow we learn to analyze what went wrong and how we made the mistake. This should be an enriching experience to develop a healthy personality and guilt has no rule in this because beyond a point guilt is self-destructive. The best part is that you have good understanding of your own problem.

**6. Why night dreams occur?**

When a boy attains maturity his testes will start producing sperms. This sperm mixes with the fluids in the prostate and seminal vesicles to form the semen. Since the storage capacity is limited and finite, whenever the quantity of semen exceeds the storage capacity the semen is expelled or ejaculated out. In deep sleep sometimes a person gets erotic dreams leading to sexual arousal and ejaculation of semen occurs in sleep itself. This is called a wet dream or nightfall. In medical terms it is known as nocturnal emission / ejaculation. It is a perfectly normal physiological process and does not cause any ill health; therefore it does not require treatment.

Sometimes during a wet dream he/she is likely to see a known person or a relative as the sexual partner. This may lead to development of guilt. The inability to have control on this process further compounds the problem and leads to depression and anxiety along with guilt complex. This surely needs attention and this can be taken care of by effective counseling. Any drug/medicine, which are prescribed, have a placebo effect only.

**7. Is there any treatment of nocturnal emission?**

Nocturnal emission is a perfectly normal physiological process and does not cause any ill health. Therefore it does not require treatment. In fact there is no medicine (allopathic or ayurvedic).

**8. What is hymen?**

The hymen is a thin membranous structure situated at the entry of the vaginal opening. It has an opening for the passage of menstrual blood. There are mainly 4 types of hymen:

Some women are born without a hymen and others accidentally tear it during vigorous exercise. The function of the hymen is to protect internal tissues early in a female life. The belief that hymen is broken only during the first intercourse is prevalent in many communities. It has no scientific evidence. Coitus can occur without tearing a very flexible hymen. The misbelief that a virgin will bleed in the first night has to be rooted out as this not a hard and fast rule. Many marriages have been ruined because of this false idea in the man's head. The notion of virginity and its glorification is as old as human civilization.

**9. What is vulva?**

The external genitalia of female are collectively known as vulva. It consists of two folds on the sides namely thin inner labia minora and thick outer labia majora, with a central large vaginal opening. The labia majora/outer lips are covered with pubic hair on the outer surfaces. It has a large number of sensory nerve endings that respond to touch and pressure. The labia minora/inner lips are hairless folds of skin. This contains extensive number of blood vessels and nerve endings. There is great variability in the appearance of labia minora. Above the vaginal opening there is a small urethral opening for passing urine and a highly sensitive rudimentary penis like organ called clitoris above the two openings.

**10. What is clitoris?**

The clitoris is situated above the urethral opening. It has no reproductive function. This has an extremely rich supply of nerve endings, making it more sensitive to touch than any other part of the female organs. The size may vary considerably from woman to woman; there is no direct relationship between the variation and capacity for arousal and orgasm.

**11. What is vagina?**

The vagina is the fibromuscular tube, connecting the external genitalia and the internal organs of reproduction in female. It is passage through which the baby passes at birth. The lower one-third of the vagina, near the vaginal opening, has more nerve endings than the upper two-thirds. Because the lower one-third of the vagina develops from outside skin and the upper two thirds develops from inside. As a result the lower vagina is more sensitive to sexual stimulation.

**12. My penis is shifted to the right, will it cause any problem in the future?**

No, it is a normal thing.

### **13. What is sexuality?**

Sexuality is a boon given to mankind by the almighty. It is the sum total of one's thinking, behavior and attitude. Or in other words it is being comfortable with one's own body, emotions and feelings. To develop a positive concept about sexuality, one has to free one's mind from all fears, misconceptions, myths and complexes regarding one's own sexuality. Sexuality as is generally considered is not restricted to the physical, mental and romantic aspects alone. It has got other dimensions like spiritual, intellectual, social, legal, aesthetic and existential.

### **14. Should adolescents be allowed to see adult movies?**

All adolescents at this stage are curious to know about sex. So it is quite natural that they may want to see nudity in movies. There is no harm as such. Certain scenes with extremes of violence, horror, sexual perversions, etc. can be threatening to the adolescent mind, as they have not attained the maturity to differentiate these from the normal life situations. Even though they are at their optimal intellectual level during this period it is most likely that their interests may shift to unwanted thoughts. And as study requires constant attention and memory, this may affect their scholastic performance also. Moreover blue films often depict women as mere sexual objects. Rarely it may impair the long-term relationship with women in general resulting in a miserable marital relationship.

Experimentation is a normal part of the adolescent development, however, anything in excess is dangerous and hence viewing these films frequently is not advisable.

### **15. Why conflicts arise between parents and the teenager?**

One of the biggest conflicts among teenagers and elders is the sudden need for the child to have self-identity, personal freedom and space to grow up. Often it will come so fast that parents are reluctant to let go; they have trouble seeing their child as having developed into a young adult and suddenly demanding personal space.

Disagreements about sexual attitudes and behaviors often influence how well adolescents and parents in some families get along. Most have little communication with their parents about sexual matters and feel they've been given little or no information about sex. By doing this, parents are risking their children's well being and good ethical development. There are many benefits to a freer expression of love within the home. Much of adolescent's sexual identity will come straight from their peer group. Some beneficial suggestions for a parent to do are; to monitor peer groups carefully (get to know their parents), take active interest in your teen's life activities,

schoolwork, and always stress good communication while guiding them toward a healthy ethical environment.

**16. What is masturbation?**

Masturbation is the process of self-stimulation, designed to derive pleasure, thorough any means except sexual intercourse. Masturbation is playing with the genitals and stimulating them and is universal among adolescent boys and not uncommon among adolescent girls.

**17. Is masturbation unhealthy?**

Every boy at one time or other, in one-way or other has masturbated, but it may not be always so for girls. It has no adverse effect on the health of the individual and may provide an alternate safe sexual outlet. But if masturbation becomes an obsession and interferes with daily routines, then it is time for consulting a doctor / counsellor.

**18. Do females masturbate often?**

Masturbation is a harmless natural outlet for sexual stimulation and is universal among boys but traditionally cultural values prevent many girls from doing so or admitting it openly.

**19. What is sexual or gender orientation?**

One's sexual orientation is a reflection of ones own sexual and emotional feelings toward people of the same or opposite gender. Sexual orientation will emerge over time. As young boys and girls grow up they begin to feel romantically and sexually attracted to other people and develop orientation towards the other sex (heterosexual) and sometimes towards the same sex (homosexual). Genetic factors, psychosocial and socio-cultural factors determine sexual orientation. The sexual orientation of a person is expressed by his / her attractions, fantasies, attitude and behavior.

**20. What is homosexuality?**

A homosexual is a person who is attracted to and has sexual relations to, and has sexual relations with, a person of the same sex. Such feelings and activities may be a passing stage in a person's life, or it may be a lifelong process. Sexual activity is a personal matter and homosexuality is certainly different from hetero-sexuality, it is not considered normal in our society.

**21. What is lesbianism?**

Homosexuality among women is termed as lesbianism. It is not so uncommon for adolescent girls to be attracted to each other; at some stage the attraction and emotional dependence take a physical or sexual turn. This is a passing phase, unlike lesbianism, a long lasting sexual expression and preference. There is passionate kissing, intense body contact, mutual oral genital or clitoris stimulation, all leading to possibility of sharing body fluids with a risk for HIV transmission if any of the partner is HIV infected.

## **22. Is homosexuality physically and morally safe?**

This is a dispute that has been going on since homosexuality came about as a public concern. There are three theories that are presented to explain homosexuality; they are: biological/ genetic, psychological, and behavioral. All the above theories have supporting evidence, however, scientists lean towards genetic factors. Most social scientists do not support the idea that people simply decide to become gay because of a fad, to rebel, or because of being misinformed in sex education class.

## **23. How do I get periods?**

For the first 14 days (approx), an egg starts ripening in your ovaries. Then, when the egg is ripe, it leaves the ovary and starts traveling down the fallopian tubes.

At this same time, progesterone, which is a hormone produced in the ovary, works to line your uterus with blood and tissue (therefore "cushioning" an eventually fertilized egg). If a ripe egg does not become fertilized with a sperm after traveling down the fallopian tubes for about seven days, it disintegrates and starts to shed. Once the egg sheds and the uterine wall has broken off, it flows out of your cervix and vagina, in the form of "blood". It's Day 1 again, and your cycle starts to repeat.

It takes a few years for your body to adopt a regular pattern of menstruation, so don't be surprised if your own is a little off schedule right now. A good idea is to use a calendar to help predict when your period is going to begin each month. It will also help if you record the day of your past period and any symptoms you may experience, like tender breasts, cramps, headaches, backaches, loss of sleep, fatigue, bloating, and acne. If your period is too heavy and painful, you may want to ask a health personal to suggest an over-the-counter medication, or see your doctor.

## **24. What is the duration of normal menstrual period?**

The cycle of your periods covers a time frame of around 24-35 days. The time frame is different for everyone because all bodies are so different. The first day of your cycle is the first day you' start "bleeding", and the last day of your cycle is the day before you start your next menstruation. Now, everything that goes on in between these two days depends on your own

body. The length of your cycle will not always be the same so don't worry that it is not always 28 days.

Although symptoms before and during your period may often be annoying, there are things you can do:

Stay away from salty foods, which cause your body to hold water. This adds to the "bloating" feeling you may experience before your period begins.

Use a hot water bottle on your stomach or back if you experience aches.

Talk to your health personal for advice on using simple over-the-counter remedies like ibuprofen. If your symptoms are serious, a physician can prescribe stronger medication, like prostaglandin inhibitors [(Naprosyn(r), Ana-prox(r), Ponstan(r), Motrin(r) or Vioxx(r))].

Exercise and sleep are also important. They both keep your mind and body healthy.

If none of these things work for you, don't hesitate to speak to your doctor. Very effective treatments are available to help you, and there's no reason to suffer.

## **25. Is it safe to wear a tampon?**

To avoid staining your clothing, you will need to wear a sanitary pad, a tampon, or a combination of the two. It's important to choose the right absorbency so that there is no leakage. You may find that you will have to change your pad or tampon every 4 hours or so. Because the tampon is worn inside the body, it is important to change it regularly because of the possibility of a very rare, but serious condition called toxic shock syndrome (TSS). Common bacteria that live on the skin cause TSS. Doctors believe that since blood is a breeding ground for bacteria, leaving a tampon for long hours causes the bacteria (staphylococci) to grow excessively and release toxins. When this happens; there is a S-M-A-L-L chance that you may develop a sudden high fever and achy body, and become very weak. Serious side effects follow, and in a small percentage even death.

Change your tampon every 4-8 hours! If you are removing a tampon, and after 4-8 hours white fiber is still showing, try a lower absorbency. When using a tampon overnight for up to eight hours, insert a fresh one right before you go to sleep, using the lowest absorbency needed, and remove it right when you wake up.

- Tampons not advisable
- In unmarried adolescent due to cultural reasons (chances of breaking hymen if not used properly)

- If one had a previous occurrence of toxic shock syndrome
- If one has heavy bleeding during the menstruation.

**26. I have not had menses yet. My friends often tease me for this. This often makes me mad. Could you please help me to take this in an easy way?**

The normal age of onset of menses (menarche) is around 11-13 years. But it could be late upto 15-16 years with no medical concern. If you have not had menses by that age consult a doctor, as there can be conditions, which need intervention at early stages.

**27. When I have periods I experience severe tiredness especially after tuition, is this because of periods or any other problems?**

During menstruation there are so many hormonal variations taking place in the body and considerable amount of blood is lost. Most of the girls experience tiredness during menses and is not abnormal especially when you are continuing with strenuous routines.

**28. If a girl has not had her periods till 14 years it is a cause for concern.**

Menstrual periods occur only after certain biological growth of the body and when the body has attained a certain critical weight. This is influenced by heredity, race, health status and altitude. Nutrition is an important factor in the onset of menarche. The energy needs of an adolescent girl are much greater than those during childhood. The average Indian girl has been found to consume inadequate amount of nutrients. For this reason the age of menarche among rural and urban poor girls is later than that of urban affluent girls. Girls living in hilly areas also have menstrual periods at a later age. This is because high altitude slows down the rate of weight increase from the very beginning of life. However, if a girl has not had her periods till the age of 16 years, it would be better if a doctor is consulted.

**29. Is it normal to have clots in the menstrual blood?**

Blood should be liquid, but some women may pass small clots. Large clots mean that the loss is abnormal and the fibrinolytic system cannot breakdown all the blood that is shed.

**30. What is precocious puberty?**

The appearance of any secondary sexual characteristics before 8 years or the onset of menarche prior to age 10 is considered precocious. Constitutional precocity run in family and usually occurs very close to the borderline age of 8 years. The most serious effect of precocity is the resultant adult short stature. Since the skeleton is very sensitive to even lowest levels of



estrogens these children are transiently tall for their age. However, due to early epiphysial fusion, eventually they are of short stature generally below 5 feet.

**31. Who gets polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)?**

Although the susceptibility to PCOS is often inherited the exact cause is unknown. Polycystic ovary syndrome is less common among women as they get older and it's extremely uncommon in postmenopausal women. Unfortunately the consequences, such as diabetes and lipid abnormalities, of PCOS can last long after menopause.

**32. How can you identify a girl with PCO?**

The symptoms of PCOS most often begin with the onset of menstruation, but can begin earlier with the preteen years or can develop at any time during a woman's childbearing years. Most people who have this condition are obese, have facial hair, or very dark hair, and acne. These external features, makes the diagnosis easy.

**33. How can PCO be diagnosed?**

Many physicians diagnose polycystic ovary syndrome based on the symptoms. Confirmation of polycystic ovarian syndrome requires ultra sound examination to confirm presence of multicysts, enlarged ovary and blood testing for a variety of hormones. These hormones are produced by the ovaries, as well as the adrenal glands, pituitary gland, and thyroid gland. A complete evaluation for this syndrome includes a full physical examination and laboratory testing for cholesterol, trygliceride, glucose, and insulin.

**34. My doctor told me that I have many cysts all over the ovaries. What does it mean?**

Usually when a girl presents with PCO the doctor may look for the external symptoms, which has been explained. To confirm the diagnosis she may also do a ultrasound, which shows the presence of numerous cysts in the ovaries.

Sometimes some of these cysts can grow very large, and when this happens, it is very painful. If the cyst gets too big, then something more serious can happen, this is, that the ovary can sort of twist, which cuts of the blood flow to the ovary, and ultimetly in the end, your ovary might have to be removed. When the cysts get large, it is very painful.

**35. What is the usual treatment for PCO?**

Treatment of PCOS is largely dependent on the symptoms experienced by an individual woman, as well as whether fertility is an issue. For women not interested in becoming pregnant, oral contraceptives are effective for

regulating menstrual cycles; reducing the level of male hormones; and minimizing the risks of uterine cancer.

Treatments for the symptoms of polycystic ovary syndrome include:

- Losing weight if you are overweight or obese
- Progestins (synthetic progesterones)
- Oral contraceptives
- Insulin-sensitizing anti-diabetes drugs
- Anti-androgens
- GnRH analogs
- Fertility therapy with ovulation-inducing drugs.

### **36. What is the surgical therapy for PCOS?**

An operation called a laparoscopy, which is where the doctors go into the pelvis with a sort of tube. They don't have to actually cut it open. Once inside, they can find the large cyst and be aspirated (or in other words, to shrink it down so it wouldn't be so big)

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