

Puberty Kit: Description of Teaching Aids

The **Puberty Kit** is a tool that can help teach about puberty and hygiene. Seeing and feeling items that can support health in puberty can build familiarity and enhance learning.

Pre-made kits may be available for loan from your public health unit or school nurse. Products shown in pre-made kits are examples: particular brands aren't endorsed. You can use this description to assemble your own kit. Consider using unscented products.

How to Use this Description of Teaching Aids – Use the discussion points below to explain what the item is and how it can be used to help with puberty changes. You can find related lesson plans at: <https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/lesson-plans-resources/resource-finder>

List of Contents and Description

Active Living (Photo)

- Physical and recreational activities such as sports, walking and having fun with friends outside can:
 - improve energy, physical and mental well-being
 - help regulate mood swings
 - increase feelings of belonging

Antiperspirant and/or Deodorant (Product)

- In addition to daily washing, is sometimes is used on the underarms to manage increased odor.
- Antiperspirant stops sweat from forming; deodorant absorbs or removes odor.
- Check ingredient list for allergies or other concerns.

Athletic Supporter (Product or photo)

- Can be worn as support or protection for genitals during contact sports (e.g. hockey).

Baking Soda in Box (Photo)

- Can be used as an inexpensive, absorbent foot powder, deodorant or dry shampoo.

Hat (Product)

- Wash or change hats so germs, dirt, sweat and oil don't rub on the face and hair.
- Hats are good protection from the sun's heat and damaging rays.

Bra – youth size (Product)

- Everyone has some breast development in puberty. For male assigned youth, this development is usually temporary. For female assigned youth, some changes are temporary (e.g. tenderness) and others are lasting (e.g. size and shape change).
- Some people wear a bra for comfort, modesty or support.

Comb (Product)

- A comb or brush can be used to manage and untangle hair.
- As looks become more important some people chose to style their hair.

Healthy Nutrition (Photo or visual copy of the new food guide)

- Eating healthy food choices:
 - Improves energy, physical and mental well-being.
 - May help regulate mood swings and menstrual symptoms.
- Enjoy eating a variety of healthy foods each day including plenty of fruits and vegetables, protein foods and whole grains.
- Limit foods high in sodium, sugars or saturated fats.

Hot Water Bottle (Product or photo)

- In addition to exercise, nutrition, stress management, hydration and rest, warmth may help with menstrual cramps as an alternative to pain medications.

Ibuprofen (Empty box/bottle or photo)

- Exercise, nutrition, stress management, hydration, rest and warmth may help reduce menstrual cramps.
- Over the counter medications, like Ibuprofen, may help with menstrual cramps, discomfort and heavy bleeding.
- Ask a parent or guardian before taking any medication.
- Do NOT take more than the recommended amount.

Socks (Product)

- Wash feet and change socks every day to manage increased sweat and odor.
- Occasionally, wash the insoles of shoes.

Laundry Soap (Small product or photo)

- Wear clean socks and underwear every day; wash clothes often.
- Wash bedding and/or pajamas after wet dreams if semen is ejaculated on them.
- Wash underwear and bottoms in cold water if menstrual fluid is on them.
- People can learn how to do your own laundry in the machine, laundromat or sink.

Menstrual Products (listed below)

- It's a good idea to keep menstrual supplies handy in a locker or bag.
- Pads are usually available at school offices. Sometimes tampons are too.
- Choose unscented menstrual products.
- Do not dispose of menstrual products in the toilet. Place in the garbage.

Disposable Pads (Product)

- Are applied to underwear to absorb menstrual flow as it leaves the vagina.
- Come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

- Pads attach to the inside of underwear by sticky strips. If they have wings, the wings wrap around the leg openings of the underwear.
- Change pads often. Wrap used pads in toilet paper and put in garbage.

Reusable Pads (Product or photo)

- Are applied to underwear to absorb menstrual flow as it leaves the vagina.
- Come in a variety of shapes, sizes and materials.
- Pads typically have wings that wrap around the leg openings of underwear and attach together to hold the pad in place.
- They often have washable liners that are inserted into the pad.
- Change the liner or the pad often. Rinse in cold water as soon as possible after use but do not soak. Launder following product directions.
- At school, put used liners/pads in a sealable container or Ziploc bag.

Tampons (Product)

- Are absorbent products put inside the vagina to absorb menstrual flow before it leaves the vagina.
- They may come with a plastic or cardboard applicator.
- Use the lowest absorbency needed; if the tampon is still somewhat dry after 3 or 4 hours, use a lighter absorbency.
- It's important to follow the instructions carefully to learn how to use safely. Incorrect use can result in Toxic Shock Syndrome, a rare but serious infection.
- Check in with a trusted adult for support in how to use and how often to change.
- Tampons need to be changed often: usually at least every 4 hours during the day and no longer than 6-8 hours at night.
- Wrap used tampons in toilet paper and put them into the garbage.

Pantyliners (Product)

- Are applied to underwear and absorb vaginal fluid and light menstrual flow as it leaves the body.
- Attach to the underwear by sticky strips.

Menstruation Underwear/Period Panties (Product or photo)

- Washable underwear specially made to absorb menstrual fluid.
- Some products come with a special liner that can be changed.
- Rinse the underwear or liner in cold water as soon as possible after use.
- Follow the instructions on the product package to learn how often to change and how to wash.
- Can provide good back up on heavy period days and overnight.

Menstrual Cup (Product or Photo)

- Silicone or plastic cups that are inserted into the vagina and collect menstrual flow before it leaves the body.
- Comes in a variety of sizes and can be used by people of any age.

- Follow the instructions on the package or product website to insert.
- Can be safely left in for up to 12 hours; may need changed more often.
- Some people use with pantyliners.
- Disposable cups are removed, wrapped in toilet paper and put in the garbage; reusable cups are removed, rinsed as directed and reinserted.

Razor (Product – keep guard on and put in baggie)

- Some people remove their hair on their face, under arms and legs; others don't.
- Never share razors, not even with family members.
- Pubic hair (genital area hair) is normal and healthy. Some people choose to remove pubic hair. Talk to a trusted adult.

Shampoo (Product)

- Used to wash hair to clean away the oil and dirt.
- Some people wash their hair every day or two; some less often.
- Over-washing can increase oil production and irritate the scalp.

Shaving Foam, Cream or Gel (Photo)

- Shaving with moisture:
 - Feels better as it reduces friction.
 - Lowers the risk of razor burn or skin irritation.
- Some people use shaving foam, cream or gel or soap and water.

Soap/Shower Gel (Product)

- A mild or unscented liquid or bar soap can be used for showering or bathing and for washing the face twice daily.
- If a person doesn't shower or bath daily, it is important to remember to wash the feet, neck/ears, armpits and genital-anal area daily (anywhere dark, damp).
- Scented soaps can cause dry skin.

Toothbrush, Toothpaste, and Dental Floss (Products in a baggie)

- Brush and floss teeth at least twice a day; be careful not to brush too hard.
- Also brush the tongue and inside of the cheeks.
- Visit the dentist once or twice a year for checkups.
- Do not share toothbrushes, not even with family members.

T-Shirt - Cotton (Product)

- Natural fibers like cotton, hemp, linen and bamboo:
 - Allow the skin to breathe.
 - May be more comfortable to wear.
- It is important to wash clothes often.

Underwear - Cotton (Product)

- Choosing natural fibers like cotton, hemp, linen and bamboo:

- Allows genital areas to “breathe.”
- Keeps moisture away from the body.
- May reduce genital and urinary tract infections.
- Synthetic underwear (e.g. nylon, polyester, rayon) and very tight underwear may increase the risk of infection.
- It is important to change underwear every day.
- Underwear should be comfortably loose to allow testicles to move close to or away from the body. This regulates temperature and promotes healthy sperm production.

Wash Cloth (Product)

- A clean washcloth or sponge can be used twice daily to wash the face with warm water and mild soap.
- No other skin care products are usually necessary unless advised by a health care provider or parents.

Water Bottle (Product)

- Drinking water is important, especially during physical activity and hot weather.
- Plain water is the easiest, least expensive and doesn't cause tooth decay.
- It is important to NOT share water bottles or other objects like forks, chap/lip stick and straws, even with close friends or family members, as they can spread germs that can cause sickness or infection.
- Energy drinks and caffeinated drinks do not count as water and may lead to serious health problems.
- Sodas and juices do not count as water and have high sugar content.
- Artificially sweetened drinks do not count as water and may lead to health problems.

Youth may have questions about:

- Douches – douching (squirting water or other liquid) into the vagina is unnecessary and **not recommended** as they may lead to infection. The vagina cleans itself naturally with vaginal discharge.
- Feminine deodorant spray – using perfume or deodorant in the genital area is unnecessary and **not recommended** as they may lead to infection. Washing the vulva, labia and vaginal areas with water and a mild soap daily is important.
- Yeast infections - a yeast infection is an infection of the vagina. Anytime there is itching, pain or unusual discharge from the vagina it is important to talk to a parent or trusted adult. There are treatments available.