



EVERYTHING BOYS AGES 8-12

SHOULD KNOW

JAMIE MYERS



EVERYTHING BOYS AGES 8-12 SHOULD KNOW

Understand Puberty, Build Healthy Habits,
Manage Emotions, Handle Peer Pressure, Set
Goals, Discover Passions, and More!

JAMIE MYERS

For questions, email: Support@AwesomeReads.org

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INTRODUCTION



Every boy's childhood looks different, but there are some common struggles most boys experience. While your focus at this time might be to have as much fun with your friends as possible, there are some things to know that will help you stay healthy and active as you grow. In this book, you'll find

answers to common questions about your body and how its changing, why certain everyday tasks are important, information about mental and emotional health, and some advice for personal growth.

Like every young boy, you're probably still trying to figure out life. You might already have a couple of friends that you go to for advice. Although it's good to have people to talk to, sometimes their answers might not be helpful; your friends are still figuring things out, just like you. If you're like most boys, you're probably worried about all the weird stuff that's going on inside your body. You may be too embarrassed to ask anyone about some of this stuff, but don't worry; that's completely normal! This book was designed to answer some of the questions you might feel weird about asking.

As you grow up, your body goes through all kinds of changes. To make it even better, your world will be changing at the same time! This can feel a little scary at first, and that's okay.

Think about each time you start a new grade at school. That first day is filled with excitement—and uncertainty. You have new classes, you might have new friends, and everyone—parents, teachers, and classmates—expect different things from you. Life, in general, can feel like that.

If no one talks to you about this time in your life, you might feel alone, but that's one of the reasons we wrote this book. Just like it's embarrassing to ask some questions, sometimes adults feel embarrassed talking about them!

This book can be helpful even if you don't read it cover-to-cover. If you have a question, take a look at the table of contents to find the section that might give you an answer. Some other good places to look for answers include your guardians, an older sibling or cousin, and the nurse at your school or doctor's office.

Everything Boys Ages 8-12 Should Know goes into detail, making it easy to understand how your body changes. When you're done reading, you'll know what to expect as you grow up and how to deal with and control your feelings. You will also learn how to develop a daily routine to maintain good hygiene and stay healthy. Personal hygiene, grooming, and taking care of your body are healthy practices to develop as you grow up.

In addition to these changes, this book will help you start to think about your goals and dreams. These will change over the years, but the habits you start building now can help you throughout your life. Hopefully, this book answers the majority of your questions and encourages you to learn more!

A NOTE TO PARENTS

As this book covers topics such as puberty and sexual development, we recommend that you read this book in full before gifting it to your child; this way, you know what conversations are likely to come from reading the text. The intention of this book is to help give your child a good idea of what will happen to their bodies and lives as they grow toward adolescence. With that being said, many of these topics require further conversations, especially those that have cultural and/or spiritual implications.

CHAPTER ONE: WHY IS MY BODY CHANGING?



To put it simply, your body is changing because it's growing; it's just doing what it was designed to do! These changes are the most natural, normally occurring things to happen to you, and everyone goes through this stage in life. They may not say anything about it to you) or even mention it at all), but everyone experiences these changes. In this chapter, we will cover some topics that may feel uncomfortable, especially since we're going to use clinical terms for body parts to avoid confusion.

So, what causes this change?

Both boys and girls have hormones in their bodies that cause them to grow. Hormones are chemicals in our bodies that send messages to cause something to start (or stop) happening. These hormones influence various parts of the body in different ways, depending on the age and gender of the person.

When you get to be anywhere between 9 and 15 years old, your brain will begin to produce these hormones, which will initiate changes, starting a process called *puberty*. In boys, these hormones make their way through the bloodstream and send a signal to the testes, telling them to begin the production of testosterone and sperm. The hormone *testosterone* is responsible for most of the changes boys go through during puberty.

The changes these hormones cause happen both outside your body and on the inside. Your mind is adjusting to all the new hormones at the same time your body is, so you might experience feelings of confusion or intense emotions you've never felt before when going through puberty. There's a good chance you're feeling anxious about how your body is changing, too.

Puberty typically occurs between the ages of 7 and 13 for girls and a bit later for boys, as we mentioned before. It's possible that some of your friends still

look like kids while others have already started growing a mustache! This is because puberty happens at a different time for each person. Every person is unique. Your family history also plays a big part in when you go through puberty.

ADOLESCENCE

The phase when we change from kids into adults is known as *adolescence*. Adolescence usually starts around 11 or 12 and lasts until the early 20s—everyone is different, though, so don't worry if your experience is different. As your body grows into an adult body, your mind, perspectives, and personality will also change.

You have nothing to be embarrassed about; everything about you is fine. Keep in mind that your body is doing its job. Remember, your parents went through puberty when they were the same age as you are now. So, now that we know these changes in your body are normal, let's talk about the science behind puberty.

WHAT IS PUBERTY?

If you ask anyone your age what puberty is, you may get different answers and probably a *lot* of guesses. Simply put, puberty is when a child's body turns into an adult body. Puberty is the appearance of significant changes in your body. These changes will occur in three major areas: physical, emotional, and social. It's important to understand that it's not just your body that changes; your personal sentiments and relationships will evolve as well.

Some of the physical changes include hair growth on the face, underarms, or chest, a deeper voice, and the development of acne or pimples. Because of the influx of hormones, you might experience mood swings or intensified emotions. Your brain will continue to develop as well, which can change how you think about the world around you.

Everyone experiences these changes during puberty, but the changes will occur at different times for different people. For boys, puberty happens later than for girls; most boys see puberty changes around the ages of 10-11, and for some, it may only become noticeable once they are 13-14. If your friends start going through puberty before you, just remember that this is completely normal!

HOW PUBERTY AFFECTS YOUR BODY

There are several characteristic signs that you are going through puberty—some of them are easy to spot, but others aren't so obvious. From the outside, it can be hard to tell that puberty has started because the early changes during adolescence, especially in brain and hormone levels, aren't visible from the outside. You'll probably notice the changes to your appearance before you notice the other developments that come with puberty. Below are some of the things you might notice first:

Hair Growth: You begin to experience increased hair growth in your armpits. You'll probably start growing hair down around your genital area, too; this is called *pubic hair*, and it's not always the same color as the hair on the top of your head. Some people grow hair on their backs, shoulders, or chests.

Increased Sweating: Everyone sweats, some more than others, depending on physical activity and other factors. In the genital and underarm areas, a new type of sweat gland emerges at puberty. Body odor can develop when the sweat this gland produces comes in contact with germs. Since you'll be sweating—and smelling—more, you'll need to shower more often as you pass through this natural period.

Maturing Teeth: As you grow and your adult teeth come in, the shape of your bite and the way your mouth looks may change. By puberty, most of your adult teeth have probably already come in. Kids typically get their second molars when they're 13 years old. Between the ages of 14 and 25, third molars (also called "wisdom teeth") might come in. These teeth could show up alone, in pairs, as a full set of four wisdom teeth, or not at all. This is often the time when different dental treatments start. Having a good tooth brushing (and flossing!) routine is extremely important after receiving your adult teeth.

Increased Height: When children—especially boys—are going through puberty, one of the most obvious physical experiences is a “growth spurt” (which is just a fancy way to say that you grow a lot in a short amount of time.) You'll get taller, and certain body parts, like your feet, will grow larger than before. Your body is expanding quickly as you're going through puberty; you might even think that your shoes and clothes are shrinking! This period of rapid growth lasts for two or three years. Sometimes, this process can hurt a little and leave stretch marks on the skin, depending on how fast you grow.

Increased Weight: It's completely normal to gain weight during puberty. This happens because some of your internal organs, like your stomach and intestines, get bigger. Eating foods with a lot of calcium and iron is a good idea during this time; these minerals help bones grow and keep your blood

healthy, providing more energy, proteins, and vitamins that are needed to support development.

Voice Change: Your voice will become deeper, and as it does, it will fluctuate between really high and deep until you fully transition into your adult voice. Sometimes, your voice might sound a little funny and crack or break while you are talking; it can be embarrassing, but just remember that other boys are going through the same thing! This awkward phase will stop towards the end of puberty when your voice chords are fully developed.

Sexual Organs: The male organs and testicles will expand. During puberty, your penis and testicles will grow in size, and the color of your scrotum will gradually darken. *Erections* may occur, causing the penis to stiffen. This can be embarrassing while you're learning how to control it. Sperm production in the testicles also starts. When you get an erection, semen, composed of sperm and some additional body fluids, may be released; this is called *ejaculation*. Now that your testes are producing sperm, if you have sex without using protection and ejaculation occurs, you could get a female pregnant. You will probably experience "wet dreams" when you ejaculate in your sleep. It can help to talk to an older male that you trust about how to cope with these moments.

Sexuality: When you start growing up, your body goes through changes that can make you feel like being very close to someone in a special way. This is because of those hormones we mentioned earlier. When you start growing up, your body makes some chemicals that can make you want to do certain things that will make you feel good. One of those things might be having sex for the first time. Sometimes, people might start to like someone new and eventually feel love for them. They might also touch their private parts themselves, which is called masturbation. It's important to talk to your family about this, even if you feel awkward, as every family holds a different value system for how to approach sex and masturbation.

Oily face: Acne and pimples are an unfortunate side effect of puberty. Not all boys get them, but it's a very common condition. Your face, upper back, and/or chest may break out in pimples. Washing your face twice a day with mild soap and water can help a lot, and there are also doctors called dermatologists who focus just on the skin. The wonderful news is that most cases of acne improve, or even clear up completely, by the time a person reaches adulthood.

Brain Development: Brain growth is faster during adolescence than it was during childhood. During puberty, many neurons grow quickly, creating new pathways in your brain and allowing you to understand more complex ideas. The way these nerve bundles connect in your body changes, which makes it possible to think in more complicated ways—which is why school is getting harder, too.

There's a reason this book dedicates an entire section to puberty, and it's to help you understand that what you're going through is normal. It's something your body must experience, and you should not be ashamed of the changes. All your peers are dealing with the same transformation in private, so though it may feel lonely, you're not alone.

CHAPTER TWO: PHYSICAL CHANGES

