

## PREPARING FOR PUBERTY

Kids grow up, sometimes sooner than we like! In general, puberty usually starts for girls between the ages of 9 and 11, and for most boys between the ages of 10 and 13, although the exact age at which puberty starts varies widely among individuals. Puberty is a time when children mature physically, emotionally and intellectually. This process may last for several years.

Your pre-teen may feel excited or embarrassed about their new body, worried about being normal, happy to be growing up, confused about sexual feelings and experiencing mood swings. Here are some things you can do to assist your child to be prepared for puberty:

- ◆ Don't wait until you notice changes in your child's body before you start discussing puberty. Changes will be well underway before you see anything.
- ◆ Children need information about puberty before it starts. Your child may not be in puberty, but they may have questions about others who are.
- ◆ Puberty occurs at different rates for everyone – assure your child that puberty will occur when the time is right for him/her.
- ◆ Explain the changes that are similar for boys and girls and those that are different.
- ◆ Assist your child to cope with puberty. Puberty is hard work and his/her body will require more sleep, good nutrition, good coping patterns and extra attention to hygiene.
- ◆ As many children and adolescents are uncomfortable with their changing bodies, respect the need for privacy and independence.
- ◆ Be a positive role model.

Your local public library and health unit have books, videos and other resources on puberty and sexual health.

For more information contact:

- ◆ Your local Health Unit
- ◆ HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 (a free call) or [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)
- ◆ [www.viha.ca/children/school\\_years](http://www.viha.ca/children/school_years)
- ◆ [www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)

### Health Units:

Esquimalt	250-519-5311	Salt Spring Island	250-538-4880
Outer Gulf Islands	250-539-3099	Sooke	250-642-5464
Peninsula	250-544-2400	Victoria	250-388-2200
Saanich	250-519-5100	West Shore	250-519-3490