

## Lesson 2: Puberty and Personal Hygiene

### Curriculum Expectations

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D2.4 - Students demonstrate an understanding of personal care needs and the application of personal hygienic practices associated with the onset of puberty.

[Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum](#)

### How to Use

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This lesson plan contains several activities to achieve the curriculum expectation above. You may choose to do some or all of the activities, based on the needs of your students and the time available. Some of the activities build on the ones that come before them, but all can be used as stand-alone activities. For a quick lesson, combine activities A, B and C.



Educators may choose to use these [Google Slides](#) to complement this lesson plan. The slides provide visual aids and key points to enhance the teaching experience. They can be used as a flexible resource to engage students and facilitate discussions. Detailed information and student activities remain available in the lesson plan, which can be referenced as needed.

### Classroom Activities & Timing

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- A. Ground Rules (5 minutes)
- B. Puberty Kit Discussion (25 minutes)
- C. Hygiene Habits (Fill in the Blanks) (10 minutes)
- D. Advice Corner Interview (15 minutes)
- E. Question Box (10 minutes)

## Required Materials

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- Puberty Kit
- Handout: Advice Corner

\*The puberty kit images and the student handout are available at the end of this lesson.

## Background Information for Educators

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As children enter puberty, personal hygiene becomes increasingly important. Educators can guide students in understanding the changes their bodies undergo and the importance of personal hygiene. Open discussions about these topics help students develop healthy habits and feel more confident as they navigate adolescence.

Knowing how to care for their changing bodies helps students stay healthy. Encouraging students to ask questions and seek advice from trusted adults can reinforce the importance of good hygiene practices. Integrating these lessons into the broader health curriculum ensures that students are well prepared to manage the physical changes of puberty.

If needed, refer to [Lesson 1](#) for more information on:

- Considerations
- Creating a comfortable learning environment
- Redirecting the topic and maintaining focus
- Addressing disclosures of abuse or violence
- Inclusive language
- Cultural sensitivity
- Instructional methods

### A. Ground Rules

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Ensure [ground rules](#) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can help ensure a successful lesson.

## B. Puberty Kit

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This activity encourages students to identify tools they can use to help with some of the more challenging aspects of puberty.

There are two options for obtaining the tools needed to teach this activity:

- Buy or collect items to make a puberty kit using the list of materials. The kit can typically be assembled for around \$20 using items from a dollar store/thrift store and can be re-used every year and shared between classes/educators.
- Print a copy of the pictorial Puberty Kit. Consider laminating the pages.

Be familiar with the contents of the kit and the discussion points for each item, before beginning the activity. The complete list of items and explanations are included in the activities after this lesson.

1. Pass out the items/pictures from the kit until all are distributed.
2. Give students a few minutes to discuss their item with their neighbour.
3. Ask one student to hold up their item or picture and share what they think the item has to do with puberty. Encourage them to guess if they are unsure.
4. Encourage other members of the class to add their own ideas about the item.
5. Add any information still missing, clarify any incorrect information and answer questions about each item, before going on to the next item.

## A. Hygiene Habits (Fill in the Blanks)

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This activity helps students reinforce important hygiene practices by identifying key habits that can support their health and well-being during puberty.

1. Access the [Slideshow](#) on your device and ensure it is visible to the class.
2. Inform students that the activity consists of slides with sentences related to hygiene practices. Each sentence has one or more blank spaces where a key word is missing.
3. Encourage students to guess the missing word for each sentence as you advance through the slides.

4. If students need help guessing the missing word, offer hints or extra details to guide them. For example, if the sentence is “During puberty, it is important to use \_\_\_\_\_ to prevent body odour”, you could provide a hint like, “This is something applied under the arms.”
5. After each guess, reveal the correct word and discuss its importance. Explain why the hygiene practice is essential and provide any additional context or tips as needed.

**Answer key:**

1. Wash your hair with shampoo and conditioner. Some people wash it every day, while others wash it once or twice a week.
2. Apply deodorant or antiperspirant as needed. The sweat glands in the armpits can cause unpleasant odours when it comes in contact with bacteria on the skin.
3. Wash hands several times a day. This will help reduce the spread of germs that can make you sick.
4. Take a bath or shower on a regular basis to stay clean. You can apply lotion as needed to prevent the skin from drying out.
5. Brush your teeth with toothpaste in the morning and before bedtime. Flossing should also be done at least once a day.
6. Change your clothes regularly. Underwear and socks should be changed every day.
7. Wash your face to remove the build-up of dirt and oils. This helps control acne (pimples).
8. Brush or comb hair to avoid tangles as needed.
9. Pads, tampons, or menstrual cups are used during someone’s period (menstruation).
10. Some people remove the hair on their face and parts of their body using a razor.

## D. Advice Corner Interview

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This activity allows students to apply what they've learned from the puberty kit activity by answering challenging questions about coping with puberty.

1. Distribute the handout **Advice Corner**.
2. Have students complete step one in class.
3. Ask students to take the handout home and complete step two with any adult they trust, including a parent, grandparent, caregiver, older sibling, aunt, uncle, coach, or family friend.
4. Explain that this is not a graded assignment and there are no right or wrong answers.
5. Take time to debrief this activity next class with questions such as:
  - What did this activity teach you about puberty?
  - What are some other questions that young people might have about puberty? How can we answer them?

*Keep in mind that not all students have equal opportunities for open discussion with family or other adults in their life.*

*Due to the sensitive nature of human sexuality topics, it is recommended that homework is reviewed or discussed but not graded.*

## F. Question Box

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Answer any questions from the [question box](#) from the previous lesson. Have students submit any new questions and address them next class. Addressing the questions at the next class allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Advice Corner

Now that you know more about puberty, you may find that your friends come to you for advice on all sorts of things. What will you tell your friends who ask the questions below?

1. Write your answers to the questions in the space provided.
2. Interview a parent, caregiver, or other supportive adult to find out how they would answer the questions. Write the adult's answers in the space provided.

*I don't like my hair because it's too oily. What suggestions do you have?*

*I feel bad – my friends told me that I stink after gym class. What can I do?*

*I have lots of pimples on my face. What should I do about them?*

*What can be a good hygiene routine as I'm going through puberty?*

# Puberty Kit

The puberty kit is a tool that can be used to teach about puberty and personal hygiene.

You can create your own puberty kit by printing these photos, or assembling your own kit. Most of the items are available in dollar stores, and it costs about \$20 to create a kit. The use of any particular brand is not endorsed.

## Contents and Description

### Acne Cream

- Contains ingredients to help prevent and treat minor acne, like pimples and blackheads.
- Directions should be followed carefully.
- Some people experience severe acne and can get help from a doctor who can prescribe stronger medication or creams.

### Active Living

- Engaging in physical activities like sports and outdoor play boosts energy and improves physical and mental well-being, especially during puberty.
- Physical activity can help to lessen menstrual cramps and discomfort.

### Antiperspirant and/or Deodorant

- Can be used in addition to washing your underarms daily.
- Antiperspirant reduces sweat, while deodorant masks odour.
- The ingredient list should be checked for potential allergens or other concerns.
- If students notice these changes (body odour, wetness under arms), they are encouraged to keep a deodorant or antiperspirant in their school belongings (i.e., locker, gym bag) as well as at home.
- Students are encouraged to discuss this topic with their parents/caregivers who can guide them in choosing the product that's right for them.

### Bra

- Offers comfort, modesty and support as breasts develop.

### **Brush & Comb**

- Helps untangle and style hair while maintaining its health by distributing oils from the scalp.
- Some people may not need to brush their hair daily, depending on their hair type (e.g., very short hair, braided hair).

### **Clothing**

- Clean clothes and underwear should be worn after a shower or bath.
- Clean clothes should be kept separate from dirty clothes.

### **Facial cleanser**

- Removes excess oil, dirt, and dead skin cells to prevent clogged pores and reduce acne.
- Recommended twice daily and after exercise.
- Acne can also be influenced by diet, hormones, stress and genetics.

### **Hand soap**

- Frequent hand washing helps prevent illness by removing germs.
- Recommended after using the washroom, before and after handling food, before and after eating, after coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose, after playing with shared toys, after touching animals.
- Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 15 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is an alternative (using a squirt the size of a quarter).

### **Healthy Eating**

- Eating healthy food improves energy, as well as physical and mental well-being.
- A healthy diet is high in vegetables, fruit, and whole grains and low in high-fat, high-sugar foods and drinks.
- Healthy eating may reduce menstrual symptoms such as bloating and cramping.

### **Hot Compress**

- A warm compress can ease menstrual cramps.
- A heating pad, hot water bottle, or warm bath can be used, as an alternative to pain medication.

### **Ibuprofen**

- Over the counter medications such as ibuprofen may help with menstrual cramps and discomfort.
- It's important to follow dosage instructions and consult an adult before taking medication.



## Laundry Soap

- Used in a washing machine to help remove dirt and stains.
- Clean clothes should be worn after a shower or bath, after exercise, or whenever clothes are dirty. Generally, clothes should be changed every day.

## Lotion

- Helps keep the skin moisturized and prevents it from becoming dry, flaky, or irritated.
- Applied to skin after washing or bathing, especially if the skin feels dry or rough.
- Moisturizing with lotion can improve skin texture, reduce itching, and help maintain a healthy skin barrier, especially during puberty when skin changes are common.

## Menstrual/Period Supplies

- Used to manage menstrual flow. Options include pads, panty liners, tampons, menstrual cups, and menstrual underwear.
- Extra menstruation supplies can be kept handy in a locker or bag. Some supplies are usually available at school offices.
- Menstrual supplies can be bought at drug, grocery, convenience and health stores or online.
- Dispose of menstrual supplies in the garbage, not the toilet.
- Wash reusable items as instructed.

## Pads and Panty Liners

- Applied to underwear to absorb menstrual flow as it leaves the vagina.
- They come in a variety of shapes and sizes and can be disposable or reusable.
- Panty liners are similar to pads and absorb light menstrual flow or vaginal discharge.
- Pads and panty liners need to be changed often. If disposable, wrap in toilet paper and put in the garbage. If reusable, place in resealable plastic/waterproof bag if away from home.
- Reusable pads are washed in the laundry just like any other clothing.

## Menstrual underwear

- Underwear with absorbent layers to manage menstrual flow.
- Can be used alone, or as a backup. Some people will use period panties to replace pads, tampons or cups. Others will use them as backup, in case a tampon or cup leaks.
- Panties are washed in the laundry just like any other clothing.

### **Menstrual cups**

- Silicone or plastic cups that are inserted into the vagina to collect menstrual flow.
- Follow insertion and cleaning instructions. Disposable cups go in the garbage; reusable ones are rinsed and reinserted.
- They can be safely left in for up to 12 hours but may need to be changed depending on the menstrual flow.

### **Razor**

- Some people remove the hair on their face and parts of their body; others do not.
- Never share razors, as the used blades can spread bacteria, fungus or viruses that could cause an infection.
- There are other ways to remove unwanted hair, such as creams or trimmers.
- Pubic hair (on genitals) is normal and healthy. Some people may choose to remove pubic hair. For questions about this, you can talk to a trusted adult.

### **Shampoo**

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

### **Shaving Cream/Gel**

- Reduces friction and irritation during shaving.
- Alternatives include soap, water, or hair conditioner.

### **Soap/Shower Gel**

- Used to remove dirt and oil from the skin and reduces bacteria to prevent odours.
- It's good practice to wash the face, neck, ears, feet, armpits and genital-anal area daily. It is recommended to use mild, unscented soap, particularly for the genital and anal areas. It's important to thoroughly rinse with water to ensure no soap residue is left behind.
- To clean an uncircumcised penis, gently pull back the foreskin and wash with warm water or a mild, unscented soap.

### **Socks**

- Change socks daily.
- Occasionally clean shoe insoles to maintain foot hygiene.

### **Tampons**

- Absorbent products put inside the vagina to absorb menstrual flow. They may or may not come with a plastic or cardboard applicator.
- Use unscented tampons and select the correct absorbency for your menstrual flow, which can change throughout your period. If the tampon is dry and difficult to remove after four hours, a lighter absorbency is recommended.
- They need to be changed often: usually at least every four hours during the day and no longer than six to eight hours at night. Follow the instructions for each product.
- To dispose of used tampons, wrap them in toilet paper and put them into the garbage.
- 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, if needed.

### **Toothbrush, Toothpaste, and Dental Floss**

- Brush teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste, including the tongue.
- Flossing is important for gum health and should be done once a day.
- Sugar and plaque are the main causes of dental cavities in children.
- Visit the dentist once or twice a year for checkups.
- Do not share toothbrushes.

### **Underwear**

- Choose cotton or natural fibre underwear as they allow the skin to “breathe” and keep moisture away from the body.
- It’s important to change your underwear every day.
- Synthetic underwear (e.g., nylon, polyester, rayon) and very tight underwear may increase the risk of yeast infections.
- Underwear should be comfortably loose. This allows the scrotum to move close to or away from the body to adjust the temperature of the testicles.

### **Wash Cloth / Loofah**

- A clean washcloth or loofah (sponge-like washcloth) can be used to wash the face and body.
- If using a washcloth, a clean one should be used every time, or ensuring it is rinsed and dried for the next time.
- If using a loofah, ensuring it is cleaned on a regular basis is important, as it can hold bacteria and mold if they’re not kept clean and dry.
- Regular showers and washing the face daily is more important during puberty, when the body is more likely to produce increased sweat and oil.

**Students may have questions about:**

- For **vulva care**, always clean from front to back to avoid infection. Use water and mild, unscented soap to wash the vulva, including the inner and outer labia. Smegma, a thick, white substance, can sometimes accumulate between the folds of the labia and around the clitoral hood. While its production is normal, if there's a large amount or a strong smell, more frequent washing may be needed. Never introduce soapy water into the vagina (also known as douching), as this could lead to infection. The vagina cleans itself and does not require any products. After washing, dry the area well and change into clean underwear.
- For **penis care**, use water and mild soap to wash the head and tip of the penis. Those with foreskin should gently pull it back to ensure the head of the penis is thoroughly cleaned. After washing, dry the area well and pull the foreskin back over the head if applicable. Put on clean underwear afterward. It's normal to have some thick, white discharge under the foreskin, called smegma. However, if there's a large amount or it has a strong smell, the penis may need more frequent cleaning.
- **Feminine deodorant spray** – using perfume or deodorant in the genital area is unnecessary and not recommended as it may lead to infection. Washing the vulva, labia and vaginal areas with water or a mild unscented soap daily is all that is needed.
- **Yeast infections** - a yeast infection is an infection in the vagina. Anytime there is itching, pain or unusual discharge from the vagina it is important to talk to a parent/caregiver or trusted adult. There are treatments available.
- **Circumcision** - Means that the foreskin (the skin covering the head of the penis) has been removed. To wash an uncircumcised penis, gently pull back the foreskin to clean underneath it. Rinse thoroughly to remove soap. After washing, gently pat the area dry with a clean towel. Ensure the area under the foreskin is also dried properly to prevent moisture build-up. Foreskin should never be forced back if it doesn't move easily. It will naturally become more retractable over time.

**Puberty kit images:**



**Acne Cream**



**Active Living**



**Deodorant or antiperspirant**



**Bra**



**Brush and Comb**



**Facial cleanser**



**Healthy Eating**



**Hot Compress**





**Ibuprofen**



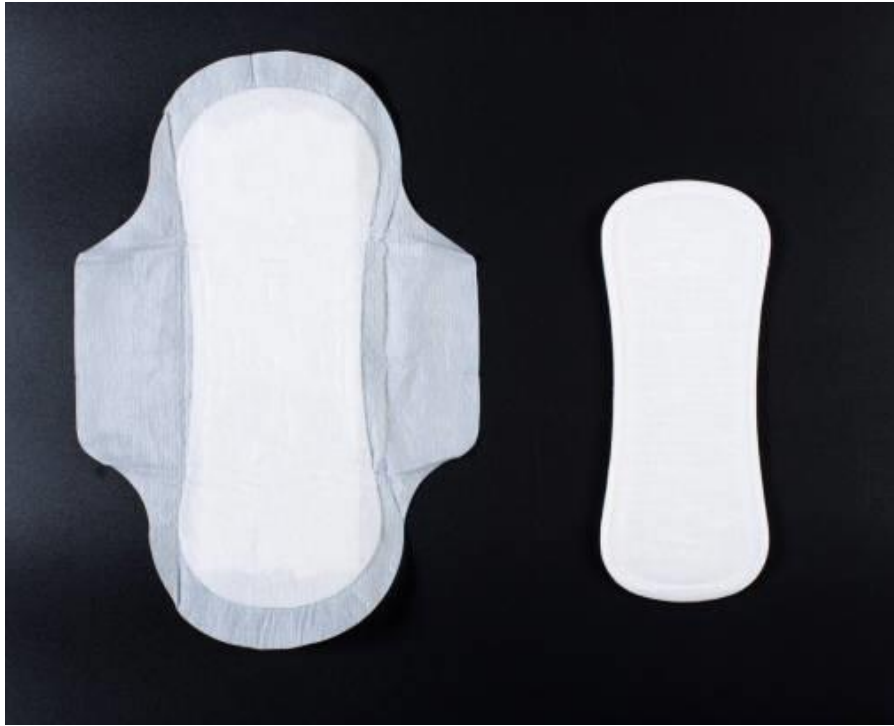
**Laundry Soap**



**Lotion**



**Period Supplies**



**Pads and Panty Liners**



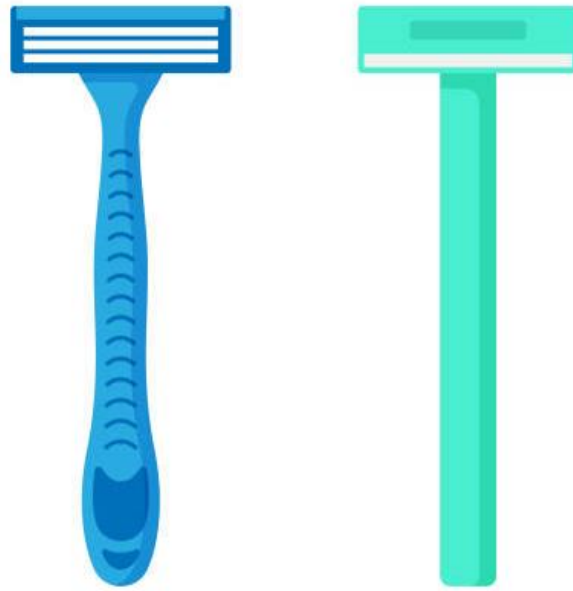
**Period Underwear**



**Tampons**



**Menstrual Cup**



**Razor**



**Shampoo**



**Shaving Cream or Gel**



**Soap or Shower Gel**



**Socks**



**Toothbrush, Toothpaste and Floss**

