

# What I Wish I Knew: PUBERTY IN GIRLS

**What is puberty?** Puberty is the normal process when your body experiences changes that make it possible to get pregnant, give birth, and become an adult.

**When does this happen?** This starts between ages 8-13 and lasts 5-7 years. Everyone goes through puberty at their own time, and some may mature faster than their peers. Some physical changes may be more gradual than others.

**What causes these changes?** When your body reaches a certain age, your brain releases a special hormone that starts puberty. Hormones are something your body makes and uses to control the functions of your body.

**What happens to me during puberty?** Hormones lead to physical and emotional changes like these:

## Attraction

You might feel sexually excited (turned on) a lot or have more sexual thoughts than you used to. You may also begin to feel attracted to someone, who you identify as your crush.

## More Sweat

People start to sweat more and may have body odor. Taking showers regularly and using deodorant can keep you clean and comfortable.

## Curves

Your hips will get wider and your body may become curvy. Weight gain is natural. It's simply a part of growing up!

## Hair Growth

It's normal to grow hair in the armpits, on the arms and legs, and on and around the vulva. Some people choose to shave, and some don't.

## Pimples

You may get pimples on your face and body. Washing your face gently with water and mild soap can get rid of excess face oil and help reduce pimples.

## Breasts

During puberty, breasts begin to grow. There's a lot of variety in this. Some people's breasts may grow fast, while others may grow slowly. It's all normal, even if one breast is bigger than another!

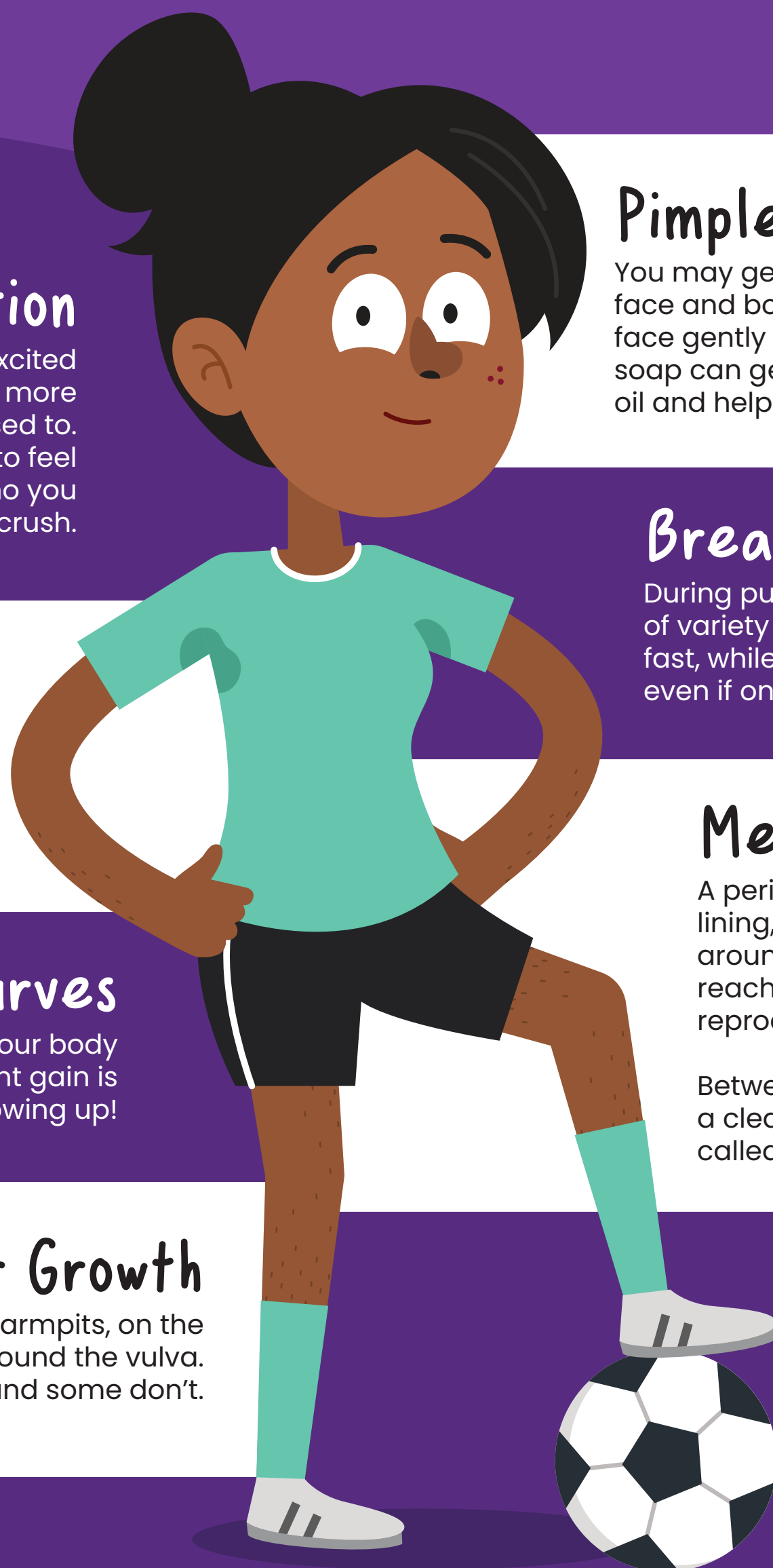
## Menstrual Cycle

A period happens when the uterus sheds its lining, mixed with some blood for a week or so, around once a month. This is when a person reaches the age at which their body is able to reproduce.

Between periods, some people also experience a clear fluid from the vagina for a few days, called cervical mucus.

## Mood Swings

Sometimes you may feel overly sensitive and become easily upset because your feelings change quickly and randomly.



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