



# Growing UP OK!



**Healthy Child Manitoba**  
Putting children and families first

.....  
**Manitoba**



# Puberty

You will grow  
and mature in your  
own way and at your  
own pace.

**Growing up means that you  
will experience lots of changes.**

Somewhere between the ages of about 8 and 16 **puberty** will begin. Puberty means lots of changes - in your body, in your feelings and in the relationships you have with others.

You're growing up and becoming a teenager and eventually, an adult. By the time you're around 18 to 20 years old, puberty will be over.

The next few years are going to be filled with a lot of new stuff. All this change might seem scary. No matter what, you'll always be the same unique person you've always been.

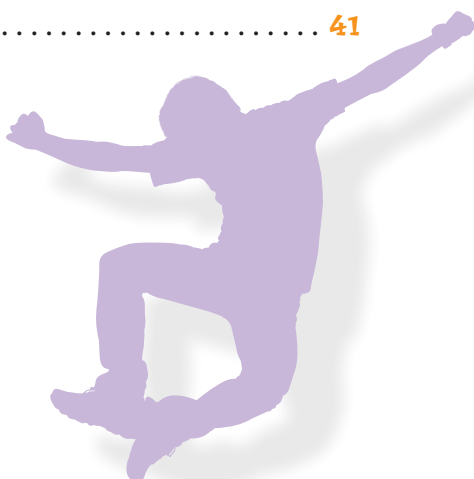
**you're growing UP OK!**



# contents


|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Your Changing Body .....       | 4  |
| Growing .....                  | 5  |
| Taking Care of Your Body ..... | 6  |
| The Male Body.....             | 10 |
| The Female Body.....           | 14 |
| Let's Talk Gender.....         | 24 |
| Personal Safety .....          | 28 |
| Changing Feelings.....         | 31 |
| Changing Relationships .....   | 34 |
| Words to know.....             | 38 |
| Resources .....                | 41 |

This booklet gives general information about puberty. Some frank language is used to explain the facts.



# Your Changing Body

**During puberty, you are growing faster and developing an adult body. Hormones in your body start these changes.**



Learning about your body can be exciting and empowering!

**Hormones** are chemicals that are made by organs called glands in your body. During puberty the most important gland is the pituitary gland. This tiny gland (at the base of the brain) tells other glands to start making hormones. The pituitary gland also makes the human growth hormone which makes the bones and muscles grow faster during puberty. Hormones also cause sexual and reproductive organs to change and develop.

Some of the changes happen only to boys and others take place only in girls. Your changing body has changing needs. During puberty, you'll need to start paying more attention to caring for your body. Let's start by looking at some of the changes that happen to both boys and girls and tips that can help you take care of yourself.

# Growing!

## Everyone grows at their own rate.

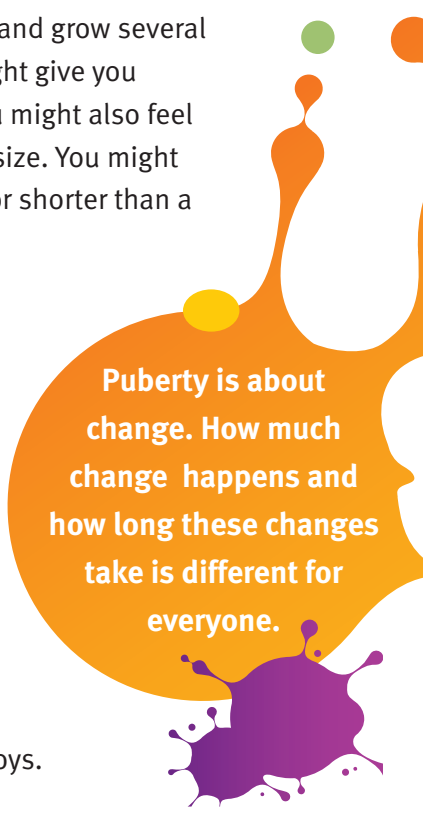
In puberty, you can have growth spurts and grow several inches in a short time. These spurts might give you sore, achy muscles (growing pains). You might also feel clumsy while you get used to your new size. You might suddenly find that you're a head taller or shorter than a friend who's the same age as you!

## You will also gain some weight.

This is healthy and is just part of becoming an adult. Boys' shoulders and chest will broaden. Girls will develop breasts, broader hips or butt and may get a layer of belly fat.

## voice

Both boys' and girls' voices will get deeper. This change will be greater in boys. As a boy's voice box (larynx) grows his voice can suddenly go from high to low or from low to high. This cracking can be a bit embarrassing sometimes. In time it will stop happening.



Puberty is about change. How much change happens and how long these changes take is different for everyone.

# Taking care of your body

## Skin

During puberty, your skin might get pretty oily. All that extra oil can block your pores (tiny holes in your skin) and cause pimples or blackheads (zits). Most young people get pimples at some time during puberty. Some people get a severe case of pimples and blackheads which is called **acne**. Acne usually clears up after puberty.

To reduce the onset of pimples:

- Wash your face with a mild soap and water.
- Keep your hair clean and brushed off your forehead.
- Avoid using makeup or use it only lightly and wash it off daily.
- Don't use someone else's make-up (bacteria can spread).
- Try not to squeeze, pick or shave over pimples. This can cause them to spread, make them last longer, or leave scars.

Sometimes if acne is a problem, you might want to see a doctor. If you are concerned about acne talk to a parent/guardian or another adult you trust.



## Teeth

Brush your teeth at least twice a day; morning and evening are best, using toothpaste (with fluoride). Floss once a day to remove plaque between your teeth. Remember to brush your tongue. It picks up odours from foods and drinks causing bad breath. It is a good idea to have a check-up with a dentist at least once a year.

## Hair care

Just like your skin, your hair might be oilier than it used to be. Wash it regularly to keep it clean.

## Body Hair

Both boys and girls will start growing hair in new places: their legs, under their arms, in the genital area (parts between your legs) and on their face. The amount of new body hair that grows and when it starts is different for every person.

## Shaving

Not everyone shaves. For some it is a personal choice. For others it is cultural. When to shave, how to shave and how often to shave are things you can talk about with an older sibling, a parent/guardian or another adult you trust.

## Body Odour

Both boys and girls start to sweat (perspire) more during puberty especially when active. The changes to your hormones will give your sweat a stronger smell. This is especially true for your underarms and feet. Some things you can do are:

- Try to wash, bathe or shower and put on clean underwear every day.
- Use deodorant or antiperspirant. Deodorants cover odour. Antiperspirants prevent sweat from reaching the surface of the skin. Less sweat means less smell.
- Try to wash your feet and put on a clean pair of socks every day to reduce foot odour.

# Taking care down there (genitals)

It is important to keep your genital area (parts between your legs) clean. This helps to prevent rashes or infections and to reduce odours.

## Boys:

- use soap and water to wash your penis, testicles (balls) and anus (bum).
- wash under and around the foreskin (loose skin at the tip of the penis).





## Girls:

- wash the vaginal area and anus (bum) with soap and water. The inside of the vagina cleans itself naturally. The vagina's natural cleaning can leave a slight creamy yellow, odourless mucus (vaginal discharge) on your underwear. This is perfectly healthy. Taking regular baths or showers should leave you feeling clean and fresh.
- Girls should try to wipe from front to back after going to the bathroom. This will stop harmful bacteria from getting into the vagina and causing an infection.

Both girls and boys should wear cotton underwear. Cotton is a natural fibre that allows the skin to breathe and prevents the trapping of moisture that can lead to infections. If you choose underwear that is made of something else, make sure it at least has a cotton crotch.

# The Male Body

At puberty, reproductive organs (sexual body parts) develop and mature. In boys, first the testicles or testes (balls) and then the penis will grow larger. Like all the changes you'll have during puberty, these changes won't happen all at once. Give yourself time. You will develop at your own pace.

## Erection and Ejaculation

### Penis

The male sexual organ. Both semen and urine leave the body through the penis (but never at the same time!)

### Foreskin

The fold of skin that may cover the end of the penis.

### Urethra

The tube that carries both urine or semen through the penis and out of the body.

### Testicles

Two oval glands that hang inside the scrotum. (Testicles are usually a bit lopsided, with one hanging a little lower than the other). The testicles produce sperm and the hormone testosterone.

### Prostate Gland

A gland that adds fluid to sperm to make semen.

### Bladder

The organ that holds urine (pee).

### Seminal vesicles

Two small organs - one on each side of the prostate gland - that, with the prostate gland, add fluid to sperm to make semen.

### Vas Deferens

The vas deferens are tubes that carry sperm from the testicles to the prostate gland.

### Anus

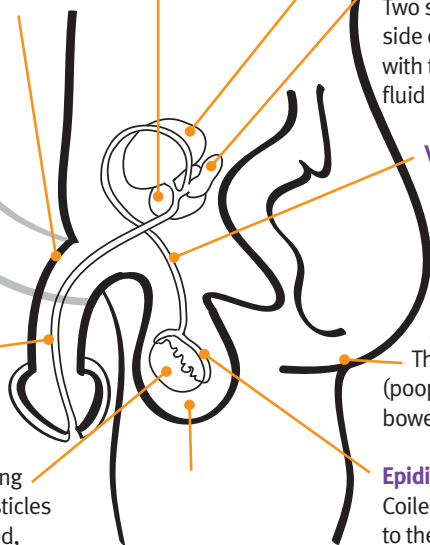
The opening from which stool (poop) leaves the body during a bowel movement (BM).

### Epididymis

Coiled tubes that are attached to the back of the testicles and connect with the vas deferens. Sperm are produced in the testicles, mature in the epididymis, and then move through the vas deferens to the prostate gland.

### Scrotum

The sack of loose skin just behind the penis. The scrotum holds the testicles.



**The basic function of the male sexual and reproductive system is to produce reproductive cells called sperm. Sperm leaves the body through a mixture of body fluids called semen.**

When males are sexually excited (aroused), the penis becomes larger and stiffer and it usually stands out from the body. This is called an **erection**.

Many things can cause sexual arousal and an erection – even just looking at someone, or wearing pants that rub against the penis. Sometimes an erection can happen when you wake up in the morning with a full bladder.

When sexual arousal reaches its peak, males may have strong feelings of pleasure called an **orgasm**. During an orgasm muscles force semen out of the penis. This is called **ejaculation**. After ejaculation, the penis becomes soft again after a little time. It is possible to have an ejaculation without having an orgasm and it's possible to have an orgasm without ejaculation. During ejaculation, the male body releases about one teaspoon of semen.

Not all erections end in ejaculation. If an erection doesn't lead to ejaculation, the penis will get soft again.



## Wet Dreams

Sometimes the penis can get erect and ejaculate semen while a male is asleep and dreaming. This is called a nocturnal emission (wet dream) and can happen to both boys and grown men. It can feel uncomfortable to wake up in damp pajamas and sheets, but wet dreams are natural. Not every boy has wet dreams and that's ok too.

## Size and Circumcision

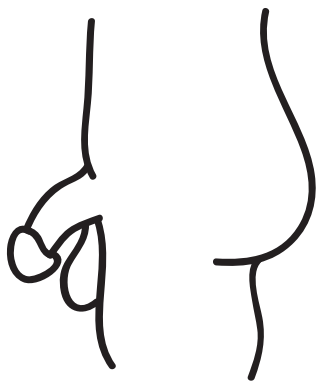
Not all penises look the same. There are lots of different sizes of penises, and all sizes are healthy. Some boys' penises look different from others because some are circumcised and some are not.

The decisions to circumcise or not circumcise may be due to cultural, religious or personal values of the family.

Size or circumcision does not affect how the penis works.

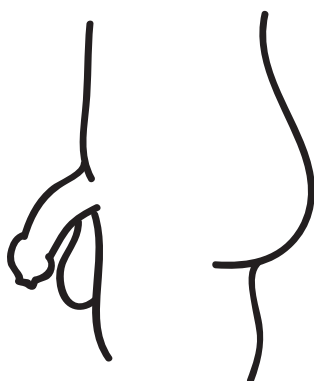
### Circumcised Penis

A boy who is circumcised has had the foreskin removed from his penis soon after birth.



### Uncircumcised Penis

An uncircumcised penis still has a foreskin. The foreskin is a loose skin that covers the tip of the penis.





## ?’s for boys

### **Why does a penis go hard ... is there a bone in it?**

Nope. The penis is made of spongy tissue; there is no bone in it. During an erection the penis fills with blood and this makes it become hard.

### **Help ... am I growing breasts?**

Boys also experience some small changes to their breasts during puberty. They may swell and hurt a little. Don't worry, this will stop after puberty.

### **Will I ever run out of sperm?**

The average ejaculation contains 40 million sperm, but you will not run out. Each testicle makes millions of new sperm every day.

### **I've got an erection ... is it noticeable?**

Some erections just happen for no reason at all. This can feel embarrassing, but these erections are natural. It's not as noticeable as you think and goes away quickly.

# The Female Body

During puberty, a girl's reproductive and sexual body parts reach maturity. Her hips broaden, her breasts develop and she will begin to have monthly periods (menstruate). These changes won't happen overnight. They will take a different amount of time for each girl.

## Uterus

The muscular organ (also called the womb) in which a fertilized egg implants and a baby grows. When not pregnant, the uterus is about the size and shape of a pear.

## Bladder

The organ that holds the urine (pee).

## Cervix

The lower part of the uterus. It forms a canal that opens into the vagina, which leads to the outside of the body.

## Urethra

The tube through which urine leaves the body.

## Vagina

The passage that goes from the uterus to the outside of the body.

## Fallopian Tubes

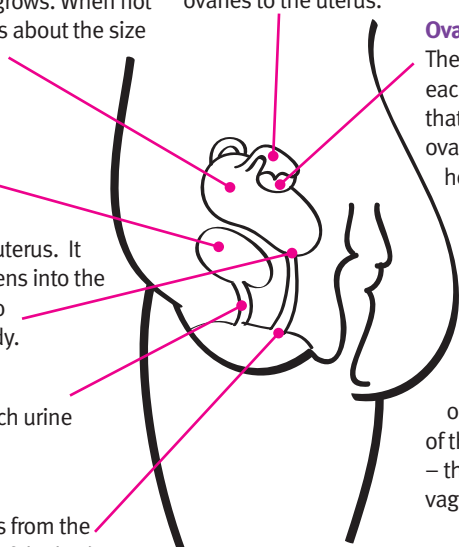
Thin tubes that extend out on both sides of the uterus. Fallopian tubes carry the eggs from the ovaries to the uterus.

## Ovaries

The two glands, one on each side of the uterus, that produce eggs. The ovaries also produce the hormones estrogen and progesterone.

## Vulva

A woman's pubic area. The vulva includes the sexual and reproductive organs on the outside of the body (see below) – the clitoris, labia and vaginal opening.



## Clitoris

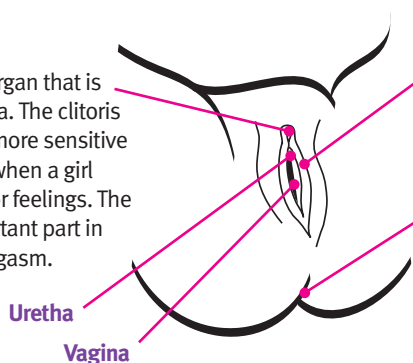
A sensitive pea-size organ that is right above the urethra. The clitoris gets a bit bigger and more sensitive when it's touched or when a girl has sexual thoughts or feelings. The clitoris plays an important part in sexual arousal and orgasm.

## Labia

Folds of skin that cover the clitoris and the openings of the vaginal opening and the urethra.

## Anus

The opening from which stool (poop) leaves the body during a bowel movement (BM).



# Breasts

Breasts begin to grow and develop during puberty. There is no set time that this will start. It is different for every girl. There is also no one size or shape for breasts to be.

## Size, shape and nipples

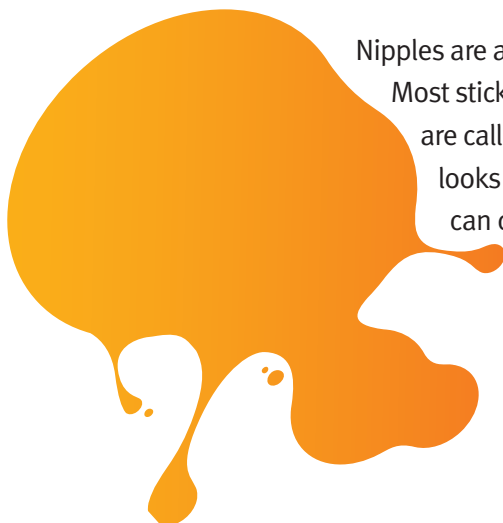
Each person's breasts will take a different amount of time to become fully developed. When they start and how long they take has nothing to do with the size they will eventually be. While breasts are developing, one breast may be slightly bigger than the other. Sometimes they even out after puberty is over and sometimes they don't. Either way is healthy.

Breasts can sometimes tingle, itch or hurt a little while they are growing. They will not burst or pop and the skin grows with the rest of the breast.

There are no exercises or creams that can make your breasts grow larger. All sizes and shapes of breasts are healthy and are different for every person.

Nipples are also different for everyone.

Most stick out but some don't. These are called inverted nipples. Even if it looks different, an inverted nipple can do everything any other nipple can do.



## Bras

A bra is underwear that provides support to the breasts. You don't have to wear a bra to keep breasts healthy, but some people find it more comfortable. Some girls prefer to wear a camisole or undershirt instead of a bra.

There is no set time to start wearing a bra. Some girls and women wear a bra only when they are doing sports, others wear one all the time except when sleeping. Bras are made with different size cups for different breast sizes.

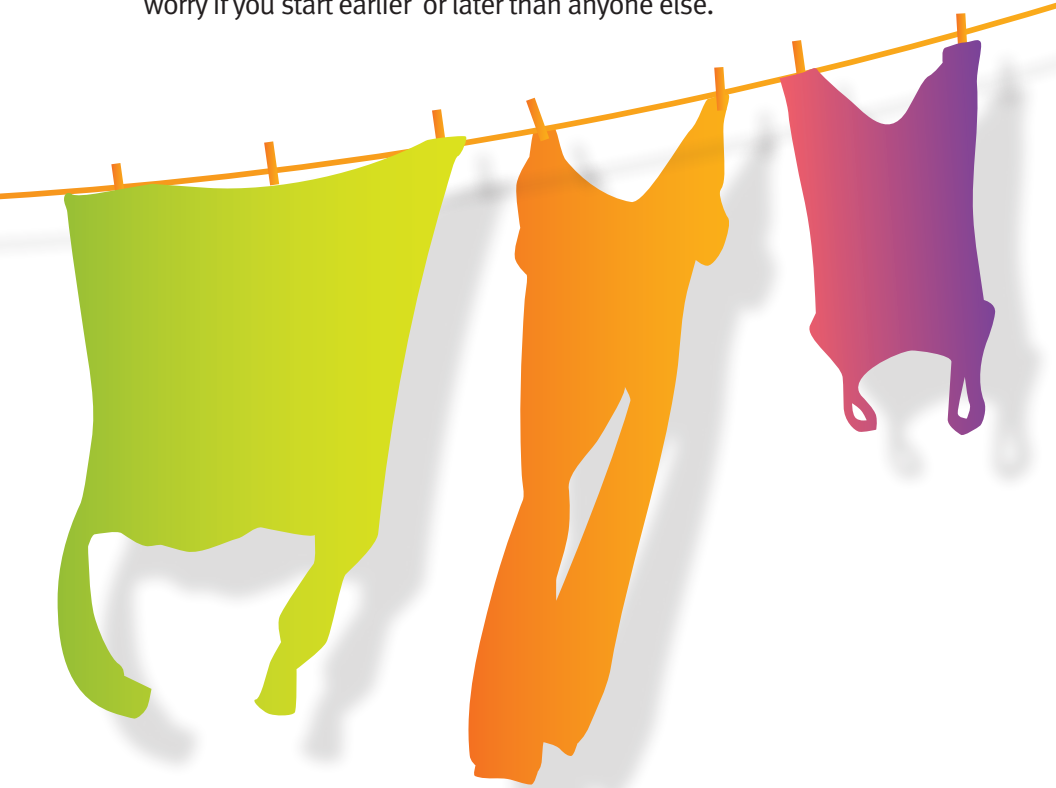




## Periods (Menstruation)

One of the biggest changes that happen to a girl during puberty is getting her period (menstruation). Having periods means that your body is able to have a baby. A period is when you lose fluid, including blood from your vagina. This is part of a regular cycle of changes that happens every month or so called the **menstrual cycle**.

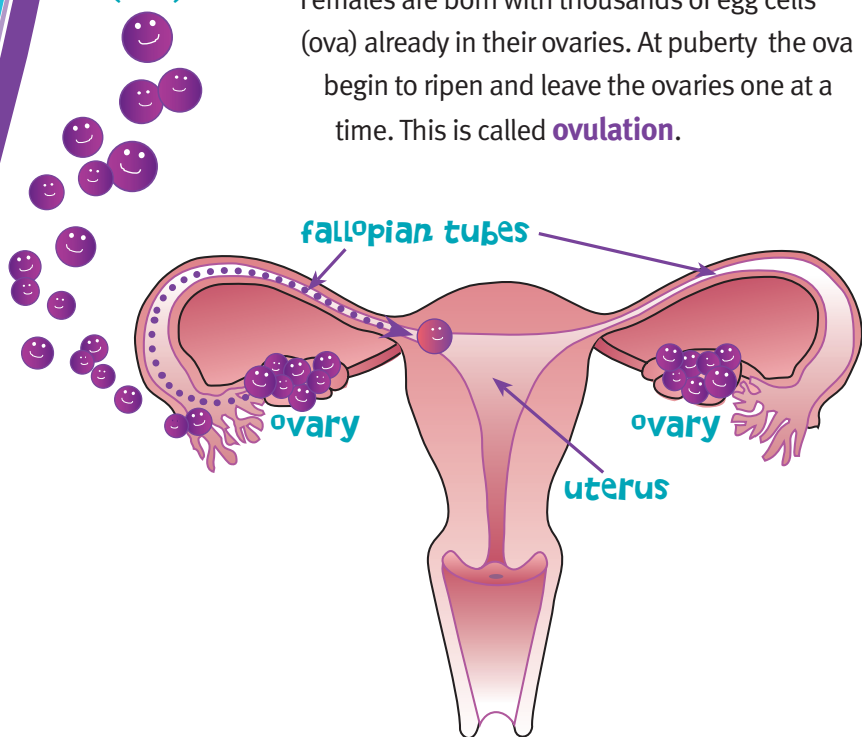
Most girls will start this cycle sometime between the ages of 9 and 16. Each girl is going to start menstruating in her own time. Don't worry if you start earlier or later than anyone else.



# The Menstrual Cycle

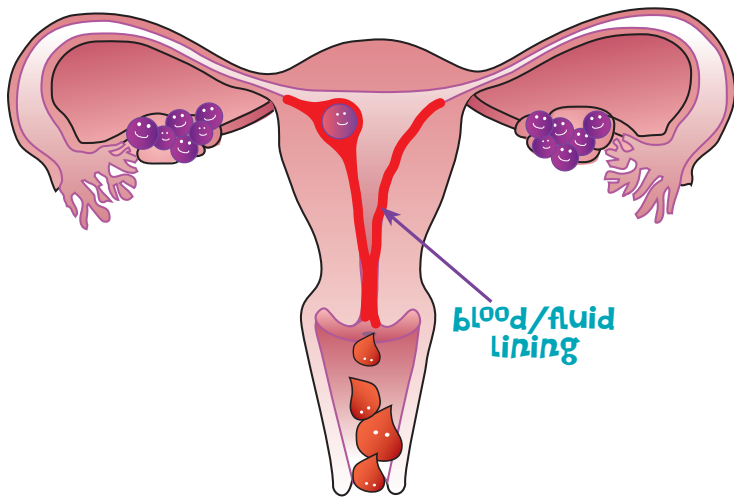
egg cells  
(ova)

Females are born with thousands of egg cells (ova) already in their ovaries. At puberty the ova begin to ripen and leave the ovaries one at a time. This is called **ovulation**.



Each month (cycle) one egg cell (ovum) leaves an ovary and goes down a fallopian tube and into the uterus. If a sperm fertilizes the egg cell, they will join and travel into the uterus. This can happen during sexual intercourse.

The lining of the uterus becomes thick with blood and fluid to help support a growing baby. A fertilized egg (embryo) may attach to this lining in the uterus. This is a pregnancy. If the pregnancy continues, the embryo will grow into a fetus and then a baby.



If the egg cell is not fertilized by a sperm cell, it will dissolve. The blood/fluid lining of the uterus isn't needed so it leaves the body through the vagina. This is menstruation.

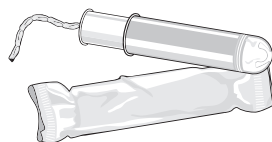
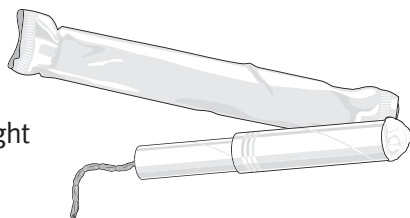
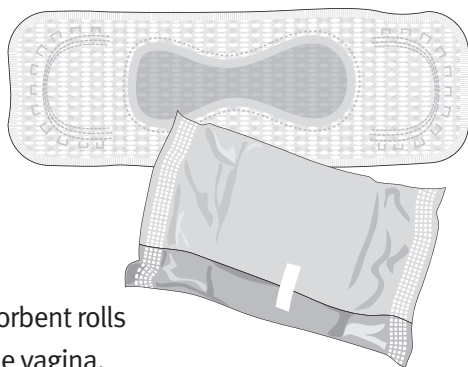
Most periods usually last between 2 and 7 days , but the length of time is different for everyone. During menstruation, about 4 to 6 tablespoons of blood and fluid leave a girl's body through her vagina. The amount of blood that flows each day can vary throughout her period.

**When girls feel sexually excited, they may also reach a peak called orgasm (when muscles in their vagina tighten and release). This causes feelings of pleasure and relaxation, but this does not have anything to do with how and when the egg comes out.**

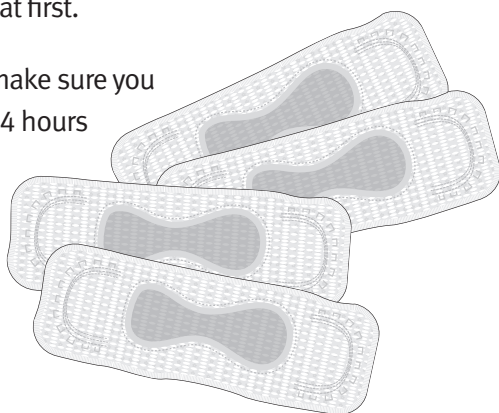
# Absorbing Menstrual Flow

During her period a girl can use pads or tampons to absorb her menstrual flow.

- Pads attach to the inside of panties with small sticky strips and catch menstrual flow outside the body.
- Tampons are small absorbent rolls that are put right into the vagina.
- Panty-liners also attach to panties but are much thinner. They work well for light discharge/flow.
- There are different sizes of pads and tampons that absorb the light and heavy blood flow. You may need different sizes depending on how things are flowing. Most girls find it easier to use pads at first.



If you decide to use pads, make sure you change them at least every 4 hours each day and again before you go to bed. This will stop odour.



Tampons need to be changed every 4 hours and it is important to choose the absorbency that is best for you. Start with a slim or junior tampon. If a tampon is dry or hard to pull out, stop using tampons for awhile. You can try them again when your period starts to get heavier. Using tampons the right way can prevent a very rare but serious infection called toxic shock syndrome.

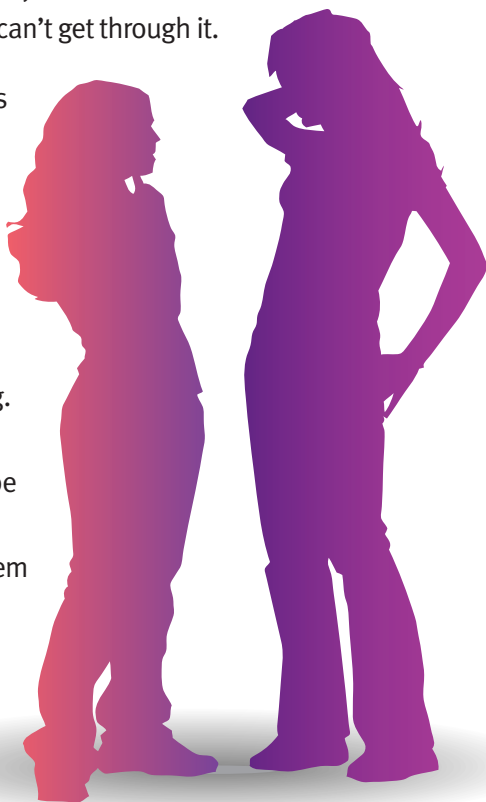
Tampons are safe and can be comfortable, but using them can take some practice. When they are put in properly:

- You shouldn't be able to feel the tampon at all.
- It won't fall out - the muscles in the walls of your vagina will hold it in place until you're ready to take it out.

Tampons won't get lost inside you. There is a cervix at the end of the vagina and a tampon can't get through it.

Each box of tampons or pads has a sheet of instructions (with diagrams) that you can read. You should also talk to a parent/guardian, an older sister or an adult you trust about what to do when you start menstruating.

Tampons and pads should be thrown away in the garbage after they are used. Wrap them in some toilet paper first.



# ?’s about Menstruation

## Should I keep track of my period?

Many women like to keep track of their menstrual cycle. It helps them figure out when they will probably get their next period. To keep track of your personal menstrual cycle you can count the number of days from start to end on a calendar. The first day you bleed is day one and the last day before your next period is the end of your cycle. The cycle is usually somewhere between 24 and 36 days in total and can be different for everyone. Each time you menstruate, you can count the number of days. After a few months, it will be easier to tell when your period may be due.

Your menstrual cycle might not be very regular for the first year or two. You might even skip your period for a month or so, and then start getting it again. Sometimes it can take a while for a girl’s body to get into a pattern. Things like illness or stress may also cause changes to the menstrual cycle.

## What if you get your period when you aren’t expecting it?

Many girls worry about getting their first period. They wonder what to do if it starts while they’re at school or away from home. If you’re at school, you can:

- keep pads in a bag or locker.
- ask a teacher or a friend for a pad.
- make a pad out of toilet paper or paper towel to use until you can get a pad.
- a panty liner (lighter, thinner pad) can give you some protection.



### **What if the blood leaks out of the tampon/pad?**

Many girls worry about leaking! On days when your flow is heavy, use a pad or tampon that will absorb more. You can also use a tampon and a pad or panty-liner together if you are worried about leaking. Don't worry if you do have some leakage. Talk to a friend, parent/guardian, teacher or adult you trust to get some help.

### **Can you still do all the things you usually do? What about bathing or sports?**

A girl who is menstruating doesn't need to act any differently than she usually does. She can exercise, dance, play sports and take a shower or bath as usual. She can even swim if she uses a tampon. Feel free to do what you want to do.

Menstruation is a healthy part of life. It is nothing to be embarrassed about.

### **How do you feel during your period? What about cramps?**

Before menstruation girls may feel:

- bloated and puffy.
- that their breasts are tender.
- a bit moody or even a little down.
- lower back pain.
- cramps (belly pain) before and during their period.

Here are some things you can do to make cramps less painful:

- Exercise.
- Take a hot bath.
- Use a hot water bottle on your lower belly (abdomen).
- If your cramps are always very painful, you should see a doctor, nurse or visit a Teen Clinic.

# Let's talk Gender:

## Identity, Roles and Expression

### What is Gender?

Understanding gender may seem simple but it can be pretty complicated.

**Gender** is the term that society uses to describe whether we are male or female. Beliefs about gender can vary from one culture to another.



### Express yourself!

Have you thought about what it means to be either male or female?

**Gender roles** are what people believe about how males and females are supposed to dress and act. Examples of these might be dressing boys in blue and girls in pink, or thinking that only men can work as mechanics and only women can work as nurses.

As young people go through puberty, they may feel more pressure to act in ways that are more “male” or “female.” There are lots of things that can make you feel this way; what we see or hear around us on TV, in music or on the internet, or what our family and friends think. There are lots of ways to express yourself including the style and colour of clothes you wear, the activities or sports you like or the way you style your hair.



This is called our **gender expression**.

For example, you might be a guy who likes pink and loves to sew and cook. Or you might be a girl who thinks blue is the best and you love cars or climbing trees. Awesome!



Feel good about who you are and don't let other people tell you how to express yourself!

Whether we are born a boy or a girl, we all have our own feelings inside about being male, female or maybe something else. This is called our **gender identity**.

For most people, the way we feel on the inside (our gender identity) matches how we look outside (our male or female body). For some people, however, this isn't the case. A person may even feel that they are in the wrong body. That means that you may have the body of a girl but you feel like you're a boy. Or you have the body of a boy, but you feel like you're a girl. If you feel this way, you may be **transgender**.

Being transgender isn't always an easy thing to deal with and you may find that puberty is a very difficult time. This may be because your body is changing in ways you are not comfortable with. The important thing to know is that you are not alone. There are lots of transgender people in society and people who can help you make sense of things. (see the back for a list of **Resources**)

# Did you know...

**Your brain is working hard!** During puberty, your brain is in one of the most active stages of growth and change. These changes affect your thoughts and feelings but also make this a time when learning and creativity is better than ever!

Your body needs **healthy food** and plenty of water every day to keep it running smoothly. Check out *Canada's Food Guide* to learn about the kinds of food you should choose and how much you should eat.

**Getting regular exercise** should keep you at a healthy weight and can help you feel good! When you are active, the ups and downs of puberty can seem a lot easier to handle. For some great fitness tips, search online for *Canada's Get Active Tip Sheets*. Kids and youth ages 5-17 should get 60 minutes (or more!) of physical activity every day.

**Sleep is important!** You'll need about nine hours of sleep every night. This should keep you alert during the day and give your body some growing time.

**Smoking, using alcohol and other drugs** are behaviours that can affect your health in a negative way. Some kids feel pressure from friends (peer pressure) to use substances and do stuff they are not comfortable with. If this happens to you, talk to an adult you trust about how to handle it.

**Growing up means making decisions for yourself.** Making good decisions takes practice. You will probably make some mistakes along the way.

# Other stuff...

## sexual feelings

Male and female bodies respond to sexual thoughts, feelings and touches – this is called **arousal** or feeling sexually excited. When you have these feelings, you might feel changes in your body like being suddenly hot (flushed) and maybe even a nervous, tingly feeling. Feelings of sexual arousal can be confusing, but they are normal and healthy.

## Masturbation

Touching and rubbing your own genitals can feel good. This is called masturbation. People of any age, male and female may choose to masturbate or not to masturbate. Both choices are safe and ok. Masturbation should be done in a private place where there won't be any interruptions.

## How are babies made?

It takes a sperm cell and an egg cell to join together to make an embryo which can be the beginning of a baby. When a man and woman have sex (sexual intercourse), the penis fits into the vagina. Sperm cells leave the man's penis, travel through the vagina into the uterus and into the fallopian tubes. A woman's egg cell moves from an ovary into a tube once a month or so. This is where the two cells may meet and join into one tiny cell (embryo) that is ready to move to the uterus to grow. This is a pregnancy.

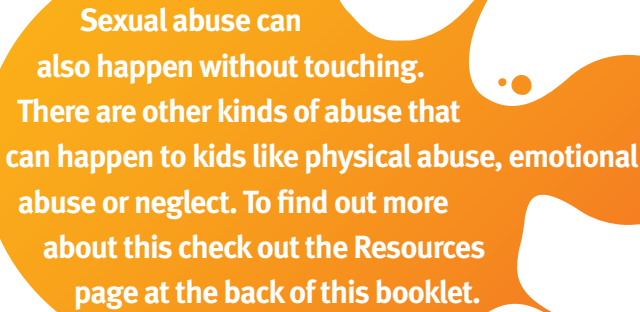
# Personal safety

**Your body belongs to you. No one – including relatives, friends, people in charge of you or strangers – has the right to touch your body against your wishes.**

Feeling sexually attracted to other people is healthy and natural. But it's not okay to touch or kiss someone unless they agree to it (provide consent). Touching someone in a sexual way without their consent is called **sexual assault**. It's also not okay to tease people in a sexual way. This is called **sexual harassment**. When an adult touches a child in a sexual way or makes a child touch them this is called **sexual abuse**. These behaviours are types of abuse and they are against the law.

If anything like this happens to you, don't keep it a secret! Tell a parent/guardian, counsellor or another adult you trust. Sometimes people who have been sexually assaulted or harassed feel embarrassed, ashamed or even guilty about what has happened. These feelings are common, but when someone hurts you in this way, it is not your fault! Sometimes a person who has hurt you is someone close to you or someone with power or authority over you. This may feel very confusing and you might find it very hard to tell anyone, but it's important that you do.

Many people who have been sexually assaulted or harassed say that keeping it a secret only made them feel worse. By telling, you can get the help you need.

An orange splash graphic with several small dots, containing text about sexual abuse.

**Sexual abuse can also happen without touching. There are other kinds of abuse that can happen to kids like physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. To find out more about this check out the Resources page at the back of this booklet.**

## Technology

Using the internet, cell phones and online gaming can be fun and cool! To make sure it's safe, here are some tips:

- Never give out any personal information or personal passwords. Make up usernames that do not allow people to figure out who you are, where you live or go to school, or even what sports teams you play for. A stranger can easily track you down with even the smallest amount of information.
- It is best to chat /game with people you know. If you meet someone online, don't believe everything they tell you! People can lie about their age, gender, location and what they want from you.
- Be careful about what you share. Once you have shared a photo or video of yourself it will be out of your control. It can be copied, used and shared with anyone else without you even knowing.
- Don't let other people - including your friends - convince you to do something you're unsure about or uncomfortable with. If something makes you feel weird, talk to a parent/guardian or another adult you trust about how to handle it.
- Text respectfully! This means giving people time to respond, not keeping tabs on them, using respectful words and texting at a good time (not late at night).



## Bullying

When teasing becomes hurtful, unkind, and constant, it crosses the line into bullying. Bullying can be verbal, physical or mental. Some kids bully by shunning others (ignoring/leaving them out) or spreading rumours about them. Others use email, chat rooms, instant messages, social networking websites, and text messages to taunt others or hurt their feelings. If you are feeling bullied, talk to a parent/guardian, teacher, or another adult you trust to get help.

**If you see someone being bullied you can make a difference by telling a bully to stop, and asking the person being bullied if they are ok. If this doesn't feel safe, tell an adult you trust.**

# Changing Feelings

**As if all the changes to your body weren't enough, you'll notice that your emotions are changing too.**

You might begin to have new interests, concerns and new ideas you want to express. You might also find that sometimes you feel moody. You might feel terrific one minute and down in the dumps the next.

These kinds of mood changes are natural when you're starting puberty. If you are feeling very sad or worried a lot of the time, or if you feel like you are not in control of what you do and say, you should talk about it with a parent/guardian or another adult you trust.



## Feeling Grown up


In many ways, you're starting to feel like an adult. You probably want to be more independent and make more of your own choices. You might want to have more privacy or be taken more seriously. You'll even find that you don't like some of the games, books and TV shows you used to. New interests and feelings are taking the place of old ones.

## Feeling Liked

During puberty, you might find that you're more interested in being liked by others. It's natural to worry about being liked. Still, you shouldn't have to act like someone else or do things you don't want to do just to fit in. Sometimes you might feel awkward, or even left out and lonely. Don't be afraid to talk about these feelings with a parent/guardian, or another adult you trust. Believe it or not, most of your classmates are feeling the exact same way!

## Feeling Attractive

**There is no "perfect" or "normal" body. Everybody's body looks different.**



**Learning to like the unique person you are is part of being happy and accepting yourself.**

You might be more interested in your looks than you used to be. When you think about how much your body is changing, that's not surprising! Right now, your body is a work in progress. You'll be interested in how it's going to turn out. You may worry about how good-looking you are. You might even wish you could change things about yourself or that you could look more like the people you see in magazines, on TV or in the movies.



The truth is that most of us won't look like models or movie stars but that doesn't mean we don't look good. Often the "ideal" bodies we see aren't ideal at all. They are unrealistic and may be unhealthy.

Feeling pressure to look a certain way can affect how you feel about yourself (self-esteem). Feeling bad about your body, worrying about your weight or feeling guilty about eating is not healthy. If you are feeling this way, talk about it with a parent/guardian or another adult you trust.



## Feeling Attracted to Others

You and your friends are also starting to have new sexual feelings. You might discover that a certain book or a show sexually excited you. A certain person might seem attractive to you. You might even feel attracted to someone you don't even know. You may develop a crush on someone. You might even imagine what it would be like to be in love, or to kiss or touch someone. It can take some time to get used to these strong new feelings. Remember, you can always ask a parent/guardian, or another adult you trust if you have questions. A whole new side of you is opening up. Get ready for some pretty powerful feelings!

# sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to your emotional, physical and sexual attraction to others.

There is more than one kind of orientation. Some people are attracted to the opposite gender (**straight**) and some people are attracted to the same gender (**gay or lesbian**). Some people are attracted to people of both genders (**bisexual**), and some people simply are not attracted to anyone at all (**asexual**). Understanding your sexual orientation can be confusing. In fact, for most of us this understanding develops over time so be patient with yourself. Sexual orientation is not something you can tell just by looking at someone – and only you can identify what your orientation is.

What's important to know is that all people can have healthy relationships and happy fulfilling lives, no matter what their sexual orientation is.



# Changing Relationships

**Part of growing up is learning to juggle many kinds of relationships –family, friends and others.**

Every person has many different kinds of relationships. Some relationships are more personal than others. As you grow up, your relationships with your family and your friends are different from when you were a young child. You may find that people, including those you know, start to treat you differently too.

## Healthy relationships have...

- respect
- trust
- honesty
- equality
- some shared and some different interests

## Friends

Friendship is one of the most important kinds of relationships.

As you get older, your relationships with your friends can feel just as important, or even more important than your relationship with your family. You may want to fit in with a certain group, make new friends or drift away from friends you've outgrown.

## Boyfriends / girlfriends

In the next few years, you will experience many new types of relationships. Some of these situations may feel awkward. Just be yourself! Others should like you for who you are and respect the choices you make. Dating allows people to practise developing personal relationships with someone they like or care about.

Every family may have different ideas (values) about dating including the age when parents/guardians will allow you to start dating. These values may be influenced by culture or religion. If you are not sure if you are ready to start dating, talk to someone about it - an older sibling, parent/guardian or an adult you trust.



## Family

No one family is the same. Look around and you will see all kinds of families who have different values, rules and expectations. As you get older your relationships with your family might start changing too. Even though you are growing and changing, your family or caregivers are still an important part of your life and a good place to go when you need help.

You're growing up. Enjoy it. It might seem like everything is changing, and changing fast, but remember that the most important thing will always stay the same – you will always be yourself.



# Words to Know

Knowing and using the right words to talk about sexuality will make sure that people know exactly what you are talking about.

**acne:** Very bad pimples and blackheads that are hard to get rid of.

**anus:** Opening where feces (poop) leaves the body. Both males and females have one.

**arousal:** The body's response to sexual thoughts, feelings and touches.

**bladder:** The organ that holds urine before it leaves the body. Both males and females have one.

**circumcision:** When the penis' foreskin is removed.

**clitoris:** A small, sensitive organ found above the urethra in females.

**discharge:** The term for any substance that is released from anywhere on the body.

**ejaculation:** The release of semen from the penis.

**erection:** When the tissues of the penis fill with blood making it larger and harder.

**estrogen:** One of the two female sex hormones made by the ovaries. It causes body changes in girls during puberty. The other is called progesterone.

**fallopian tubes:** The tubes the ova travel down to get from a female's ovaries to her uterus.

**fertilization:** When a sperm makes its way into an ovum. This starts a pregnancy.

**foreskin:** The loose skin that covers the tip of the penis.

**gay:** A male who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the same gender.

**genitals:** The outer sex organs of males and females.

**gender:** The term to describe the state of being either male or female. Some cultures recognize more than two genders

**gland:** Any organ that makes a substance used in the body. Many glands make hormones.

**hormone:** A chemical from a gland that makes cells or tissues to act in a specific way.

**labia:** The inner and outer "lips" or folds of the female vulva. They are on both sides of the vagina.

**lesbian:** A female who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the same gender.

**masturbation:** Touching your own genitals to make you feel good.

**menstrual cycle:** The female cycle that starts with menstruation and then continues as the lining of the uterus builds up and then breaks down again. It usually takes around a month.

**menstruation:** Shedding the lining of a female's uterus, which has formed in preparation for a fertilized egg.

**nocturnal emission:** The ejaculation of semen while a male is asleep. It is also known as a wet dream.

**orgasm:** An intense sensation that happens at the peak of sexual arousal. Males usually ejaculate during orgasm. Some females also release a fluid during orgasm.

**ovary:** The female gland that ripens egg cells (ova) and makes the hormones estrogen and progesterone.

**ovulation:** The release of an ovum from a female's ovary into a fallopian tube.

**ovum:** Egg cell produced in a female's ovaries (plural: ova).

**pad:** A product that attaches to the inside of a female's underwear to catch and absorb menstrual flow. It is also called a sanitary napkin or feminine napkin.

**penis:** The tube-like outer sex organ of a male.

**period:** The common name for the time when a female is menstruating.

**pituitary gland:** A gland that secretes hormones that cause growth and affect the activities of other glands. Both males and females have pituitary glands.

**pores:** Tiny openings in the outer layer of the skin.

**progesterone:** One of the two female sex hormones produced by the ovaries – the other is estrogen.

**prostate gland:** An organ that adds fluid to sperm to create semen.

**pubic area:** The area of the male or female body where the outer sex organs are found.

**reproduction:** When sexual intercourse results in a pregnancy and a new baby.

**scrotum:** The sack of loose skin just behind the penis. It contains and protects the two testicles.

**semen:** A mixture of fluid and sperm that is released from a male's penis.

**seminal vesicles:** Two small pouches that add fluid to sperm to make semen. The prostate gland also adds fluid to the sperm.

**sperm:** The male reproductive cells made in the testicles.

**straight:** A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender.

**tampon:** A small roll of absorbent material worn inside the vagina to catch and absorb menstrual flow.

**testicles:** The male sex glands. They make sperm and the male sex hormone testosterone.

**testosterone:** Male sex hormone that is made by the testicles. It causes the changes in boys during puberty.

**transgender:** People who feel that their gender identity does not match with their sexual anatomy—that is a girl who feels like she ought to have been a boy or a boy who feels like he ought to have been a girl.

**urethra:** The tube that carries urine out of the male and female body. In males, semen also leaves through the urethra.

**uterus:** A muscular organ located in a female's pelvic region. It holds a growing fetus until a baby is born. The uterus is sometimes called the womb.

**vagina:** The passage that connects a female's uterus to the outside of her body.

**vas deferens:** The tubes through which sperm moves from the testicles to the prostate gland.

**vulva:** The outer female sex organs.

**wet dream:** A common name for nocturnal emissions or the ejaculation of semen while a male is asleep.





# Resources

Here is a list of phone and internet resources that you can check out if you need help or more information about a topic you read about in this booklet. You can call or visit these resources for free.

## Puberty and health:

Health links – Info Santé call 1-888-325-9257 or 204-788-8200 for quick health info 24/7

[www.Kidshealth.org](http://www.Kidshealth.org)  
[www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)  
[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)  
[www.teentalk.ca](http://www.teentalk.ca)  
[www.cfsh.ca](http://www.cfsh.ca)

## Have a question about puberty?

Ask it at  
[thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca](mailto:thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca)

## Teen Clinics in Manitoba:

[www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/mcad/youth](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/mcad/youth)

## Sexual orientation and gender identity:

[www.rainbowresourcecentre.org](http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org)  
[www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org) - Trans youth family allies  
[www.mygsa.ca](http://www.mygsa.ca)

# Need help?

**[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)**

Help and information on:

- bullying
- violence and abuse
- feelings
- school

Live chat with a counsellor or call 1-800-668-6868 to get help on any issue.

**[www.ruralsupport.ca/youth/](http://www.ruralsupport.ca/youth/)**

Farm and rural stress line youth corner – e-mail, live chat or call 1-866-367-3276

## Personal safety:

**[www.texted.ca](http://www.texted.ca)**

**[www.definetheline.ca](http://www.definetheline.ca)**

**[www.bullying.org](http://www.bullying.org)**

**[www.thatshotcool.com](http://www.thatshotcool.com)**

**[www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca](http://www.safeschoolsmanitoba.ca)**



# Things I want to remember...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Healthy Child Manitoba**  
Putting children and families first

.....

**Manitoba** 

Adapted with permission from Alberta Health

For more copies of this resource contact  
Healthy Child Manitoba at **1-888-848-0140**  
or email **[healthychild@gov.mb.ca](mailto:healthychild@gov.mb.ca)**  
**[www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/)**

