

YOU'VE GOT MALE

Becoming a Man



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PLANNED PARENTHOOD
1-800-230-PLAN www.ppnyc.org

You've got male: becoming a man

If you were born male, you have specific physical features such as a penis and testicles, but there is more to being a MAN than having a penis. There are internal qualities and skills you need to develop. These include knowing what you believe, expressing how you feel, and treating yourself and others with respect. A MAN:

- takes care of his body
- is comfortable with himself and his masculinity
- is a good communicator
- treats people with respect, including peers, family, and romantic partners
- discusses decisions about sexual activity and condom use with his partners

Overnight male

Wet dreams (see definition below)! Facial hair! Cracking voice! Growing taller! It may seem like all of these things begin to happen overnight for some young men, while others may be thinking, "When will my body start to change?"

PUBERTY

Between the ages of 9 and 15, boys go through body changes and develop into men. This process is called "puberty," and girls go through it too. Everyone begins puberty at different ages and girls generally begin puberty earlier than boys. When you start puberty you will notice some changes, including:

- Testicles (balls) grow larger
- Penis grows longer and larger
- Body sweats more
- Skin and hair become more oily
- Body begins growing taller and you gain weight
- Hair grows around the penis, under the arms, on the face, and sometimes on the chest
- Voice begins to deepen
- Ejaculation (release of semen or "cum") occurs
- Wet dreams may occur

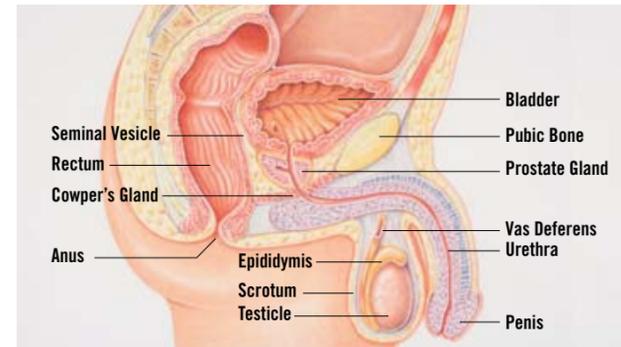
Boys and girls going through puberty have to adjust to the changes they experience both physically and emotionally. Since the body begins to produce more oils and sweats more, it is important to remember to wash your penis and scrotum (sack that holds the testicles), as well as under your arms. You may want to begin to wear deodorant.

WET DREAMS

Did you ever wake up and think that you had wet the bed? Sometimes boys may wake up with a sticky fluid (semen) on their underwear, legs, or sheets. This is called a nocturnal emission or wet dream and is completely normal! Some boys have wet dreams and some do not.

SPERM PRODUCTION

At puberty, boys begin making sperm. As long as you remain healthy, you will never stop making, or run out of, sperm.



This is how your body produces sperm:

First, the brain sends a message to the testicles to begin sperm production, and the testicles make the sperm. Once the sperm begins to mature, it moves to the epididymis. This is where it finishes maturing and awaits the big journey ahead.

Before the sperm leaves the body, it has to travel through the vas deferens, which is like a long stretch of highway. The sperm then needs to make "pit stops" along the way. Like a car on a trip, the sperm stops at different exits to "get gas and buy food." The first stop is the seminal vesicle, where the sperm gets nutrients like sugar and protein for energy for its long journey out of the body. Next, the sperm stops at the prostate gland, to receive a sticky, milky fluid that will protect it on its travels. Just before the sperm leaves the body, the Cowper's gland makes sure that the road is safe to travel on. The gland releases a fluid, sometimes called "pre-ejaculate" or "pre-cum" that moves through the urethra and removes all traces of urine and acid so that the sperm doesn't get damaged on its way out. When the man is ready to ejaculate, the sperm, now called "semen" because it has new fluids added to it, flows through the urethra and comes out through the opening at the tip of the penis.

When sperm from a man fertilizes an egg from a woman, the result is pregnancy. If a man has sexual intercourse without using protection (condoms and/or birth control) he puts himself at risk for a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or unplanned pregnancy. Men should always use protection to avoid unplanned pregnancy and STIs.

Priority male

Taking care of your body should be a top priority. Often men don't get regular physicals because they think they need to be sick before going for a check-up, or they have fears about going to the doctor. But everyone should have yearly check-ups to make sure they are healthy. A yearly check-up increases your chances of noticing infections and diseases, which can help you live a longer, healthier life.

A SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EXAMINATION

As part of a young MAN's physical exam, a medical professional will check his testicles and penis to ensure that everything is normal. If he has been sexually active, the medical professional will also check for signs of sexually transmitted infections, such as chlamydia, genital warts, and HIV (the virus that can lead to AIDS). If the medical professional does not ask if the patient has been sexually active and does not do this check, it is important for the patient to ask to be checked for STIs.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

STIs are infections that can be passed through skin-to-skin contact or through the exchange of bodily fluids, such as semen, vaginal fluids, and blood. The most effective way to avoid getting an STI is to not have vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Men who are sexually active should always wear condoms during sex to protect themselves and their partners from STIs, including HIV, the virus that can lead to AIDS. Some STIs, like chlamydia, have no symptoms — people can have STIs without even knowing it! Other STIs do have symptoms, so it is important for men to check their genital areas for any lumps, blisters, or sores, which may be signs of an STI. A burning sensation while urinating or a discharge or fluid leaking from the urethral opening at the end of the penis is also a possible sign of infection.

TESTICULAR SELF-EXAM

Another disease that is associated with the male genitals is testicular cancer. Testicular cancer is the most common form of cancer for young men between the ages of 15 and 35. If it is detected early, there is a very good chance that testicular cancer can be treated and cured. A testicular self-exam is an easy way for men to check themselves for early detection of cancerous lumps. Men should perform this self-exam once a month, starting at the age of 15. A good time to do it is while in the shower or after a shower because the scrotum, the pouch that holds the testicles, will be more relaxed, making it easier to feel the testicles.

To perform a testicular self-exam, follow the steps below:

1. Hold one of your testicles between your thumb and forefinger.
2. Gently role the testicle between your fingers. On the top back side of the testicle you will feel a ridge, which is the epididymis. This is normal. The front of the testicle should be smooth, firm, and egg-shaped.
3. When finished with one testicle, check the other by repeating the same steps.

If you feel swelling of the testicles, hardness, or a lump about the size of a pea, then you should make an appointment with your doctor as soon as possible.

Insured male

If you do decide to be sexually active, wearing a condom every time you have sex is the best way to make sure that you have "full coverage and protection" against STIs. Outside of abstinence (not engaging in oral, vaginal, or anal sex), using condoms is the best way of reducing your risk of infection during sexual activity. When using a condom, put it on your penis before coming in contact with your partner. Condoms made from latex or polyurethane provide the best protection.

If you are having intercourse with a female partner but you are not ready to be a parent, you should use a condom AND ANOTHER METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL to make sure you don't have an unplanned pregnancy. Although condoms offer the best protection against STIs, they are not as effective as some other methods of birth control for preventing pregnancy.

A MAN knows how important it is to talk with his partner about condom use; to discuss how both people feel about sexual activity, including intercourse; and to understand what each person wants out of the experience. Talking about condoms with your partner will increase your chances of using protection every time you have sex.

Express male

Being able to express yourself and communicate is an important part of life. In all types of relationships — such as family, professional, social, intimate, and romantic relationships — you need to be able to let people know what you think and how you feel.

To be a good communicator, you have to be able to express your thoughts and feelings clearly, as well as listen to and understand the other person's point of view. If you can communicate effectively, you have a better chance of being understood and understanding others. This can reduce conflict or possible violence that may be a result of a misunderstanding or bad communication.

GOOD COMMUNICATION

- Stating feelings or thoughts clearly
- Being honest
- Being open to other points of view or opinions
- Using "I" statements ("I feel upset/frustrated/happy," instead of "You made me upset")
- Using eye contact
- Taking turns speaking
- Listening

BAD COMMUNICATION

- Not listening
- Using the silent treatment
- Talking at the same time as the other person
- Blaming
- Saying things with the intent of hurting the other person's feelings
- Name calling
- Using force—pushing, shoving, or hitting

Male box: health services for men

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY

To make an appointment at any of our three health centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, call 212-965-7000 or 800-230-PLAN. Services for men include: testicular exam and instruction in self exam; free condoms; STI testing and treatment; HIV testing and counseling.

COLUMBIA PRESBYTERIAN, YOUNG MEN'S CLINIC

21 Audubon Avenue (between 166th Street and 167th Street)
New York, New York 10032

No appointments needed. Call 212-342-3232 for hours.

THE DOOR

555 Broome Street, New York, New York 10013
Appointments: 212-453-0222

MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL, ADOLESCENT HEALTH CENTER

312 East 94th Street, Room 216, New York, New York, 10128
Appointments: 212-423-3000

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Call 311 to find a public health clinic near you that offers free, confidential testing for STIs, including HIV.

Resources

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY www.ppnyc.org

Information about sexual and reproductive health and relationships.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD'S "FACTS OF LIFE" LINE 212-965-7015

A 24-hour hotline offering pre-recorded messages in English and Spanish on more than 100 topics concerning sexuality and reproductive health.

SEX, ETC. www.sexetc.org

A sexuality and health newsletter and website written by teens for teens.

AMERICAN SOCIAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION <http://iwannaknow.org>

Answers to questions about teen sexual health and STI prevention

This brochure draws upon It's Perfectly Normal by Robie Harris (Boston: Candlewick Press, 1999) and What's Going On Down There? by Karen Gravelle (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 1998).

For more information, contact:

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ABOUT PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NEW YORK CITY: At Planned Parenthood of New York City, we have more than 90 years of experience providing quality reproductive health care in a safe, supportive environment. We offer services to women, men, and teens throughout New York City, regardless of age, income, or immigration status. When you talk to us, it's always confidential. To make an appointment at any one of our three health centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, call 212-965-7000 or 800-230-PLAN.