



UNIT A

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

1. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH REVIEW
2. GENDERISM

CHAPTER 1: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH REVIEW

*O you people!
Surely, We have created you
from a male and a female... [Surat Al Hujurat 49:13]*

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى...﴾ [سورة الحجرات 49:13]



CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH REVIEW

SECTION 1:

CHANGES DURING PUBERTY

- Physical Changes
- Mental Changes
- Spiritual Changes

SECTION 2:

REPRODUCTION

- Reproductive Anatomy
- Reproduction

SECTION 3:

MENSTRUATION

- Phases of the Menstrual Cycle
- Menstrual Products
- Tracking a Menstrual Cycle
- Fiqh of Menstruation

SECTION 4:

HYGIENE

- Male Reproductive Health
- Female Reproductive Health

OBJECTIVES:

After this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain common causes of delayed puberty.
2. Define accountability in Islam.
3. List alternative forms of worship during menstruation.
4. Identify which male reproductive illnesses are medical emergencies.
5. Explain the Islamic ruling of vaginal discharge.

SECTION 1:

CHANGES DURING PUBERTY

Puberty is when your body and mind transition from a child into an adult. By age 15, most adolescents have started the changes of puberty. The average age of onset is between nine and fourteen for girls, and between twelve and fifteen for boys.¹

What If I Haven't Started Puberty Yet?

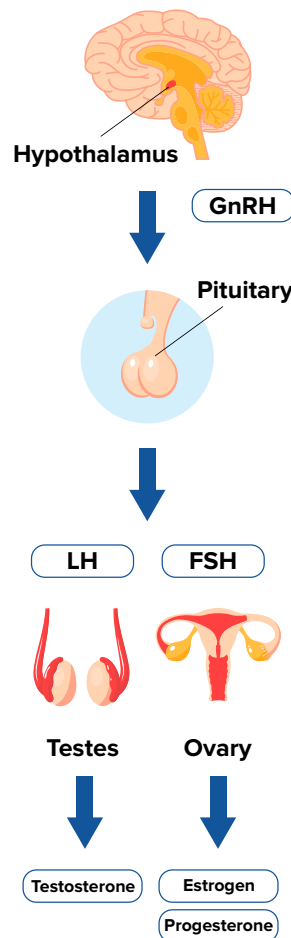
Delayed Puberty is when puberty begins later than the average age range, such as the following:²

- Females who lack breast development by age 13 or menstrual periods by age 16.
- Males who lack enlargement of the testicles by age 14.

Genetically, some teens are “late bloomers”; they start puberty later than most youth their age. This is the most common cause of delayed puberty and it is completely normal.² Such teens will start puberty when their bodies are ready and typically without any treatment.

Another reason could be due to a hormonal imbalance. Puberty begins when hormones are sent to the gonads (**Gonads** are testicles for males and ovaries for females).

Here is a summary of how puberty starts:



If these hormones are either not released by the brain nor received by the gonads, then this can cause puberty to start and stop, or not start at all.² If you are concerned about delayed puberty, please contact your healthcare provider.

What Changes Occur in Puberty?

Puberty involves physical, mental, emotional and spiritual changes.

A. PHYSICAL CHANGES

There are two major physical changes that occur in puberty: the development of secondary sex characteristics and fertility.

1. Secondary Sex Characteristics. Hormones released from your brain travel to the gonads. This signals the onset of physical changes that are grouped into **Tanner Stages**. The box on the following page describes the specific order of each gender's changes.

2. Fertility. **Fertility** means that your body is now capable of reproducing or having a baby. In males, testicles will produce sperm, and in females, an egg will be released from an ovary each month. If a sperm and egg combine during sexual intercourse, then a baby can be made.



Fertility is a major sign of becoming an adult. It means you are now intellectually and spiritually responsible for learning about sex and all that it entails, including sexual desire, sexual diseases, pregnancy, sexual violence, contraception, and more. These topics will be covered in later chapters.

TANNER STAGE	BOY TO MAN TRANSFORMATION	GIRL TO WOMAN TRANSFORMATION
Stage 1	AGE 10	AGE 9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The brain releases hormones to start puberty. • No noticeable changes yet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The brain releases hormones to start puberty. • No noticeable changes yet.
Stage 2	AGE 11	AGE 10–11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testicles get larger. • Pubic hair grows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breasts start to develop. • Pubic hair grows.
Stage 3	AGE 13	AGE 12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penis gets larger. • Voice cracks. • Muscles grow. • Increase in height (2–3 inches per year). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breasts continue to develop. • Armpit hair grows. • Hips and thighs build up fat. • Increase in height (3 inches per year).
Stage 4	AGE 14	AGE 13
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testicles and penis continue to grow. • Armpit hair grows. • Voice becomes deep. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breasts continue to develop. • First menstrual period (but may happen in an earlier stage). • Continued height growth.
Stage 5	AGE 15	AGE 15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive organs reach adult size. • Facial hair grows. • Height and muscles continue to grow until age 18. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breasts reach adult size but may change until age 18. • Reproductive organs are fully developed. • Periods become regular 6 months—2 years after the first period. • Adult height is reached 1–2 years after the first period.

B. MENTAL CHANGES

Puberty lasts 2–5 years from when it starts. The average age of when it ends is between 14 and 19 years old for females and 17 and 20 years old for males.

Along with the physical changes, you also go through many mental changes during those years. At times, they may feel like a rollercoaster of emotions. Some feelings may include the following:

- Feeling self-conscious about your appearance.
- Comparing yourself to others and understanding differences.
- Wanting to be independent and treated like an adult.
- Having mood swings (such as sadness, anger, and frustration).
- Developing strong feelings of sexual desire.
- Feeling lonely and that no one understands you.



These emotions are very normal during this stage, but they can be difficult to navigate at times. This will be further discussed in later chapters.

C. SPIRITUAL CHANGES

As a child, your awareness and knowledge of the world were limited. It was through exploring and observing that you learned about consequences and rewards. That period in your life was a time of preparation, and so you were not held accountable.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The pen has been raised for three persons: one who is sleeping until he gets up, a child until he reaches the age of puberty, and an insane person until he becomes sane”. (An-Nasa’i)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «رُفِعَ الْقَلَمُ عَنْ ثَلَاثٍ، عَنِ النَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَسْتَيْقِظَ، وَعَنِ الصَّغِيرِ حَتَّى يَكْبُرَ، وَعَنِ الْمَجْنُونِ حَتَّى يَعْقِلَ أَوْ يُفِيقَ». رواه النسائي

Learning to hold yourself accountable is a process. It is for this reason that Allah ﷻ commands you to start preparing during your childhood. By age seven, you were expected to start learning how to pray and to seek permission before entering your parent’s room at certain times of the day.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Order your children to pray when they are seven years old...”. (Abu Dawud)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ...». رواه ابوداود

Believers! At three times let those whom your right hands possess and those of your children who have not yet reached puberty ask leave of you before entering your quarters: before the Morning Prayer and when you take off your clothes at noon, and after the Night Prayer... (Surat An-Noor 24:58)

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَسْتَعِذْنَكَمُ الَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ...﴾ [سورة النور: 24:58]



By age ten, you were required to pray, to always seek permission before entering a private room and to sleep separately from others.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,
“...And invoke them to do it [salah] by the age of ten...”. (Abu Dawud)
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «...وَاضْرِبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ عَشْرِ سِنِينَ...». رواه ابوداود

And when your children attain puberty
let them ask leave to come to you... .
(Surat An-Noor 24:59)

﴿وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ...﴾ [سورة النور 24:59]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “...And separate them in their bedding”. (Abu Dawud)
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «... وَفَرَّقُوا بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ...». رواه ابوداود

These steps were to prepare you for adulthood. According to Islamic law, a Muslim becomes an adult when one of the following signs appear:³

- Nocturnal emissions
- Coarse pubic hair
- Menarche (the first menstrual period)
- Reaching the age of fifteen

While the physical changes may seem like the most important aspect of puberty, it is individual accountability that is most important. **Accountability**, or to accept responsibility for your actions and decisions, is one of the fundamental creeds in Islam. All humans will be accountable and answerable on the Day of Judgment for their beliefs and willful actions.

On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good
it has done and all the evil it has done,
it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil.
But Allah cautions you [to remember] Himself.
And Allah is full of kindness to those that serve Him.

(Surat Al 'Imran 3:30)

﴿يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحَضَّرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَ
وَاللَّهُ رَعُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾ [سورة آل عمران 3:30]

This differs from other world religions that do not consider accountability a necessary component of their faith; belief is sufficient for reaching salvation. However, in Islam, belief must be aligned with how you live your life; you demonstrate your belief in Allah by following His commandments.

When you reach puberty, the following spiritual changes occur:

- Religious obligations become binding,
- Your sins are recorded, and
- You become responsible for fulfilling Islamic rights to yourself and others.

Accountability as an Adolescent

In most secular societies today, a person between the ages of 15 and 17 is still learning right from wrong. For example, if a 15-year-old vandalizes a gas station, a 16-year-old steals from their neighbor or a 17-year-old forces another person to engage in a sexual act, then they may receive a lighter punishment than one who committed the same crime at age 18 or older. **Juvenile Detention Centers** are alternative rehabilitation facilities to jail or imprison those under the age of 18.



Even if the law does not hold youth fully responsible for their actions at this age, Allah ﷻ will. In Islam, if you commit a sin and do not seek forgiveness, then you will be held accountable for it in this world and in the Hereafter.

To Allah belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. If you disclose what is in your hearts or conceal it, Allah shall hold you accountable for it, then He will forgive whom He wills and punish whom He wills. Allah is powerful over everything. (Surat Al Baqara 2:284)

﴿لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ [سورة البقرة 2:284]

However, you are also deserving of the mercy of Allah ﷻ, such that if you sincerely repent (and make amends with anyone you wronged and make efforts to abide by the justice system), then your legal punishment can be lessened or waived, and you will be forgiven your sin by Allah ﷻ.

Activity 1: Accountability and Adolescence

Explain why holding adolescents accountable in Islam contrasts with a society that promotes a “you only live once” mentality.

Learning how to hold yourself accountable does not happen overnight. It is a lifelong process. Four ways that can help you navigate through this change include the following:

1. **Be proactive in your knowledge.** Once you hit puberty, you are now responsible for taking an active role in learning about Islam.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,
“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim...”. (Ibn Majah)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ...». رواه ابن ماجه

For example, if you struggle with praying *salah* صلاة, then you are responsible for understanding why salah has been commanded, how it benefits your life in this world and in the Hereafter and the consequences when it is not prioritized. You can set up a meeting to talk with your local imam, sign up for a salah workshop in-person or online or listen to a speech on the importance of salah.

2. You are not held accountable for what you don't know. For example, if you are unaware that ghusl is required for salah after a nocturnal emission (i.e., a wet dream), then you do not need to make up previous salah. Once you learn a ruling, you are now held accountable for abiding by it.

In addition, if you intend to remain ignorant to get out of a ruling, then you will be judged on that intention.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Deeds are but by intentions and every person shall have what he intended...".

(Al Bukhari)

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّةِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى...».
رواه البخاري



3. Give others excuses. Every Muslim is on a different spiritual level, and what you see may not be the full picture. For example, if you see another Muslim eating during Ramadan, give them excuses (that they are ill or menstruating) rather than judging or looking down upon them.

Hamdun Al Qassar, one of the great early Muslims, said,
"If a friend among your friends makes a mistake, then make seventy excuses for them.
If your hearts are unable to do this,
then know that the shortcoming is within your own selves".⁴



4. **Feel remorse when you slip up.** **Remorse** means to feel bad or sorry for something you said or did. As Muslims, remorse is a good feeling; it tells you when you did something wrong and that you should apologize to Allah ﷻ for disobeying Him and anyone else you may have hurt.

And those who when they commit any act of indecency or do injustice to themselves
remember Allah and implore [Him for] protection against their sins —
and who can protect against sins except Allah? —
And they do not deliberately persist in doing wrong.

(Surat Al 'Imran 3:135)

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [سورة آل عمران 3:135]

Allah ﷻ guarantees that if you sincerely repent, He will accept it and guarantee you mercy.

Say, 'O My servants who have wronged themselves [by sinning],
do not despair of the mercy of Allah. No doubt, Allah forgives all sins.
Indeed, it is He who is the All-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful'.

(Surat Az-Zumar 39:53)

﴿قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ [سورة الزمر 53:39]

