

# PUBERTY AND AUTISM

WHAT TO EXPECT

By

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# Content

- Puberty
- Characteristics
- Facts
- Seizures
- Anxiety
- Sexual Awareness
- Preparing for Puberty
- Things To Do
- Social Stories
- Relevant Helpers



# Puberty

- Age or stage in a person's life when the body becomes capable of sexual reproduction.
- It is a period when the body undergoes hormonal and physical changes.



# Facts about Puberty

- All go through it regardless of IQ or social skills.
  - Another stage of development
  - Varies from person to person
  - Different for boys and girls
  - Girls attain it earlier.
  - It starts only when one's body is ready.
- *Embrace it and move forward !*



# Video on Puberty & ASD



**raisingchildren.net.au**  
the australian parenting website

## Puberty & ASD

# Characteristics

- Changing bodies
- Sexual feelings
- School changes
- Seizure
- Pimples
- Anxiety
- Funky smells
- Hormonal surges and fluctuations
- Behavioural changes- improvements or regression.

# Characteristics

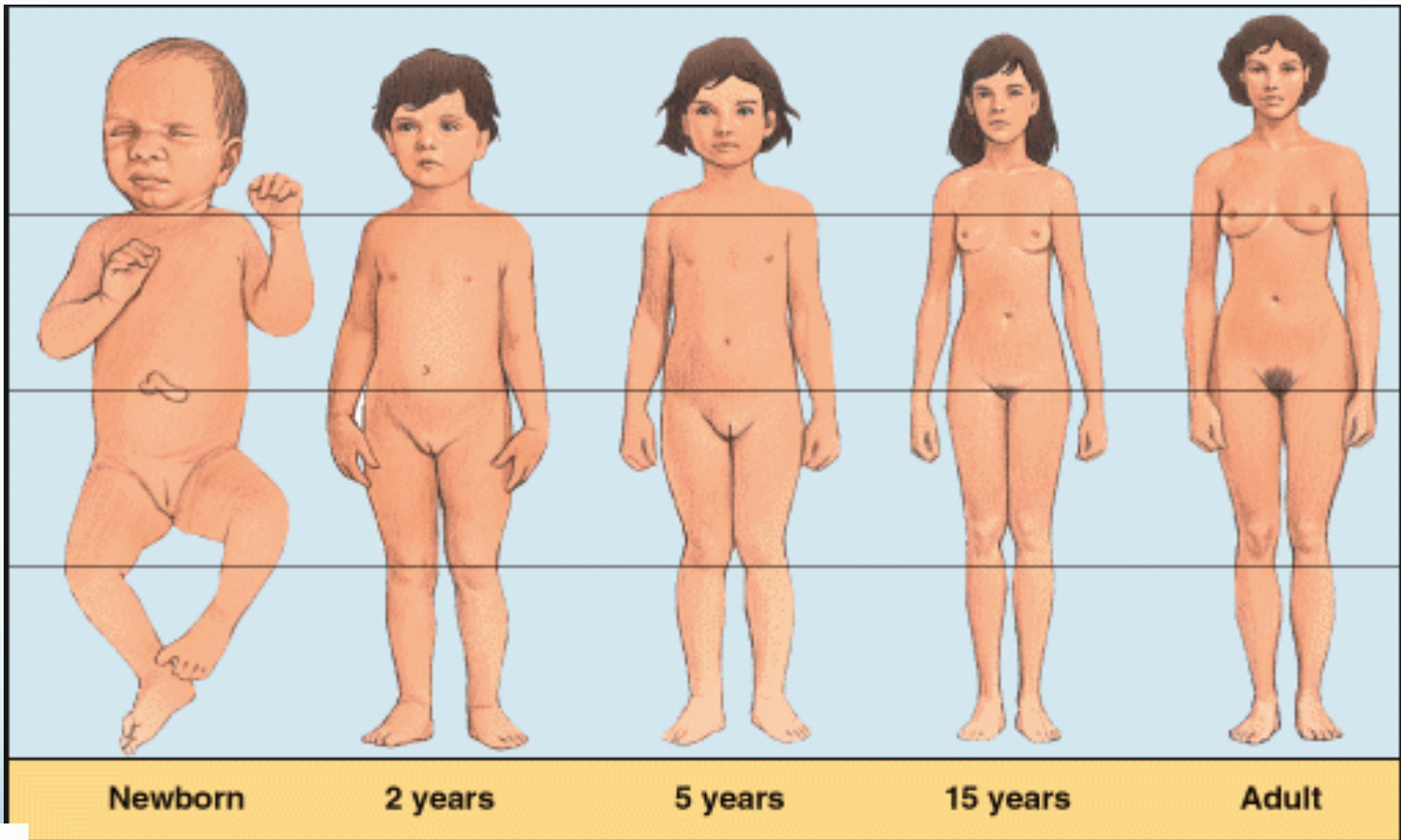


# Girls' Traits

- Girls - 7-13 (4 - 6 years)
- Hair in underarm and pubic area
- Vaginal discharge
- Breasts growth
- Menstruation
- *\*Birth control pills control periods but carry their own risks*



# Female Stages



# Tips for Menstruation

- Simulate instances for menstruation pain
- Food coloring on pad
- Use different kinds of pad
- Mother or sisters model and show how before she begins
- Teach schedule of times to change.

# Menstruation



© Menstrupedia

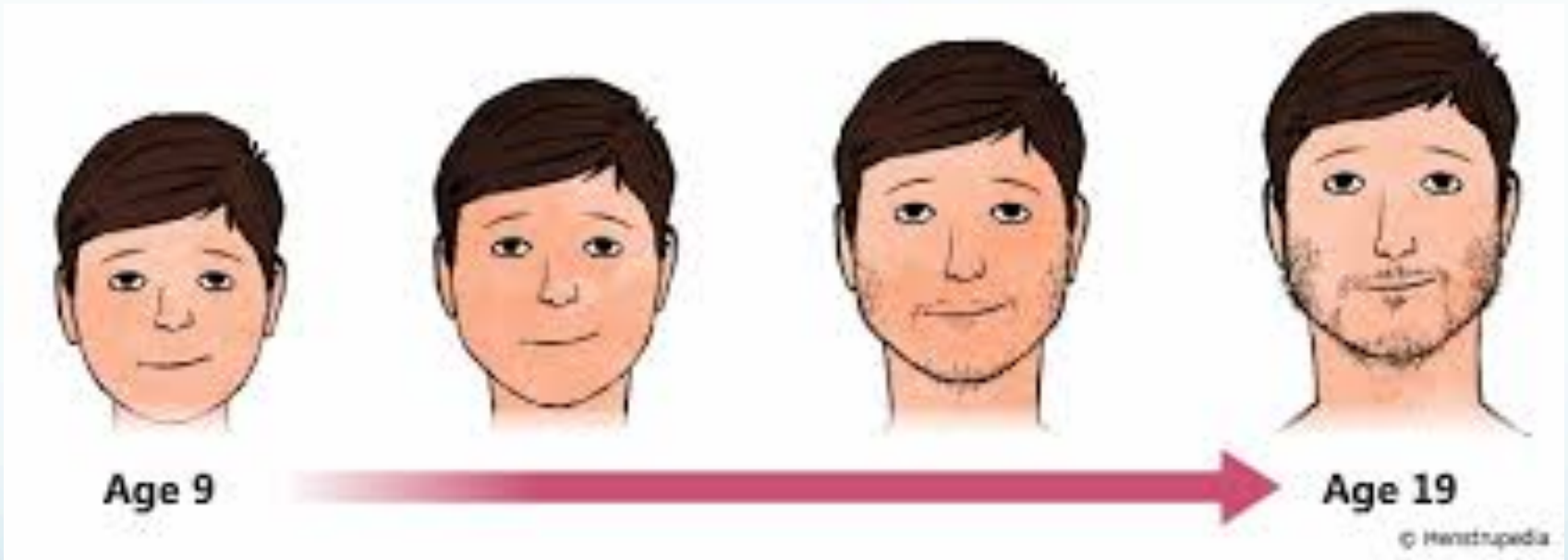
# Boys' Traits

- Boys- 9-15- (6 years)
- Erections- socially inappropriate
- Large feet
- Deep voice
- Facial hair
- Increased muscle mass
- Hair in underarm and public areas
- Ejaculate semen

Penis and testicle growth



# Male Stages



# Puberty Video For Boys



# Puberty stirs discussions on





# Seizures

- Reason for onset is unknown
- May be due to hormonal changes in the body
- Some obvious accompanied by convulsions
- Not all seizures are purely neurological
- Run full test
- Vitamin B6 with magnesium can reduce seizures
- Others – subclinical and not noticeable.





# Subclinical seizures

- Aggression
- Self Injurious Behaviour (SIB)
- Unreasonable mood swings
- Arguing
- Defiance
- Severe Tantrums
- Unusual Little or no academic gains
- Losing cognitive gains



# Anxiety

- Comes with body changes- worry, stress, mood swings.
- Increased OCD

## *Manage with:*

- Calming activities eg. Yoga
- Sensory diet- physical activities; hammock etcetera
- Need for visual or written schedules
- Epsom salt baths



# Sexual Awareness

- Sexual feelings/drive are normal. Like any other human being not optional for a person with Autism,.
- They have many ways of expressing them.
- The socialization that provides the foundation for sexual identity is different, not the urge.
- Admit that sexual feelings are wonderful but must be private.
- Teach the function of body parts
- Use correct terminologies.
- Teach about sex and its appropriateness
- Teach about results of sex- reproduction.



# Preparation

- Be askable.
- Initiate related discussions
- Start early – especially for un-dressers.
- Prepare social stories
- Maintain Good hygiene.
- Teach Self Regulation
- Give private time
- Teach Hair shaving – Desensitizing
- Introduce Deodorant – non toxic aluminium



# Teach to use deodorant

**HOW TO PUT ON DEODORANT?**  
PUBERTY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

I CAN PUT ON DEODRANT!

I Can Put On Deodorant!

The graphic features a background of green leaves with water droplets. A central white banner contains the title 'HOW TO PUT ON DEODORANT?' in large blue letters and the subtitle 'PUBERTY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE' in pink. To the right, a tilted white card with an orange border contains the text 'I CAN PUT ON DEODRANT!' at the top, a central illustration of a hand applying a purple deodorant stick to an arm, and a bottom row of icons: a person, a deodorant can, a hand applying the product, and the text 'I Can Put On Deodorant!'.

# Teach to cover up



Who can see me  
naked? Who can see  
my underwear?  
Who can see my  
private parts?

# Things To Do

- Use same teaching strategies used to teach other skills
- Visual schedules -pictures of what is happening
- Check off lists
- Books – facts.
- Videos
- Real life examples
- Teach to change sheets where semen is discharged.
- Use the right medical terminology - penis, vagina etc. (from onset)
- Use clear literal language – be tactful

Introduce Social story to predict what might occur



# Teenage Boy Explains Autism





# Social Stories For Boys

- My body will look different.
- My voice will sound different.
- I will have hair in my armpit
- I will have erections and wet dreams
- Hair will grow in my pubic area
- My voice will change



# Social Stories For Girls

*Might cover:*

- developing breasts
- widening hips,
- starting periods
- Pubic hair
- Change in body shape



# Relevant Helpers

*Make a plan with :*

- Doctor,
- Teacher,
- Therapist
- Counselor
- Mentor
- Older siblings



# What you can add.

- Pictures of yourself at different ages
- Drawings of a body to show how it looks at different ages.
- Sensitivity and Understanding
- Love! Love!! Love!!!

*Nothing is personal!*



# Different Stages Of Growth



# Puberty or Not....

Single Mothers Who Have Children With Autism

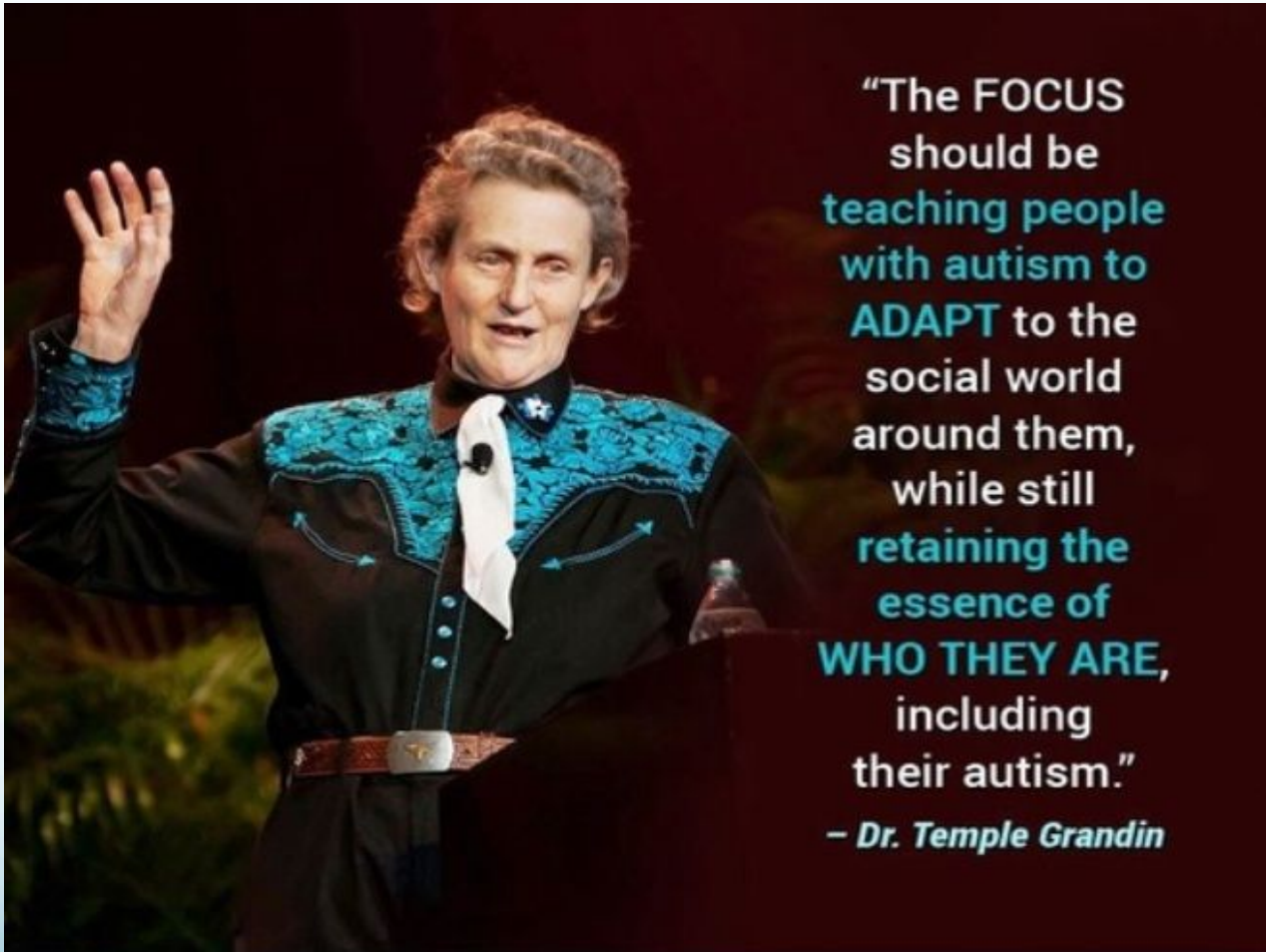
Remember  
people with

autism

have feelings too.  
Be **sensitive** and **tolerant**.



# Autism Legend



“The FOCUS should be teaching people with autism to **ADAPT** to the social world around them, while still retaining the essence of **WHO THEY ARE**, including their autism.”

– *Dr. Temple Grandin*



# Learning from Temple Grandin





# Thank You!



# Credits

- Tacanow.Org
- Autism speaks
- Autism- [help.org](http://help.org)
- [Autism.com](http://Autism.com)



# Contact Details

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