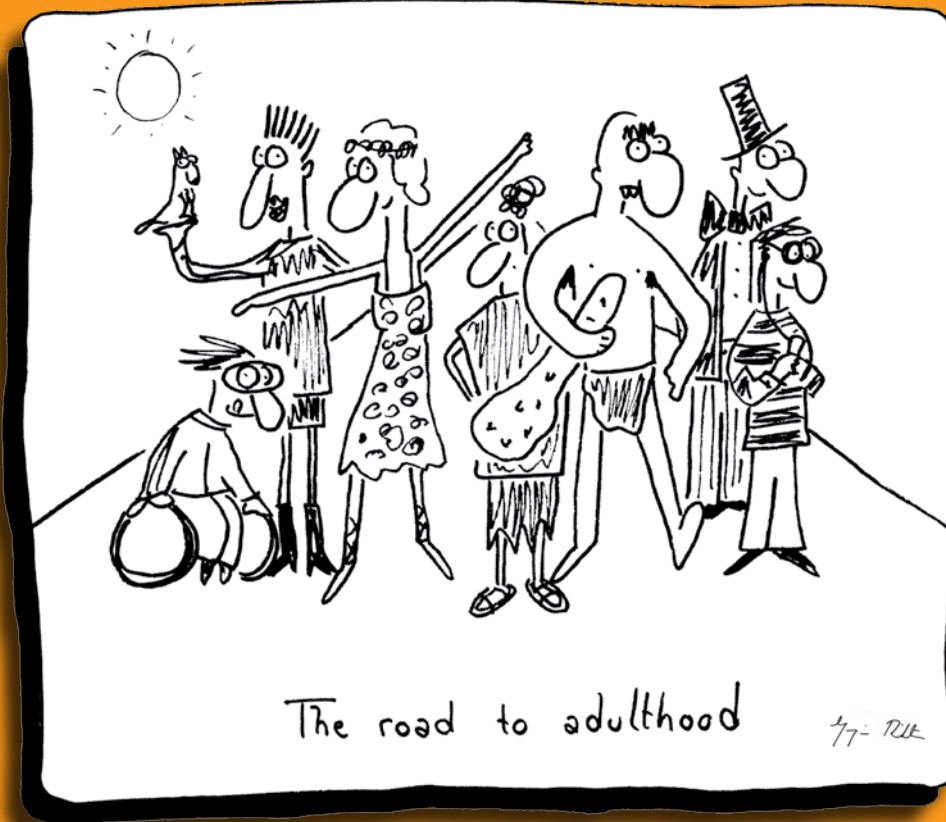


Relationships Sex and Other Stuff



a few things

**TEENAGERS WILL NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND OTHER STUFF!**

Why do you need this book?

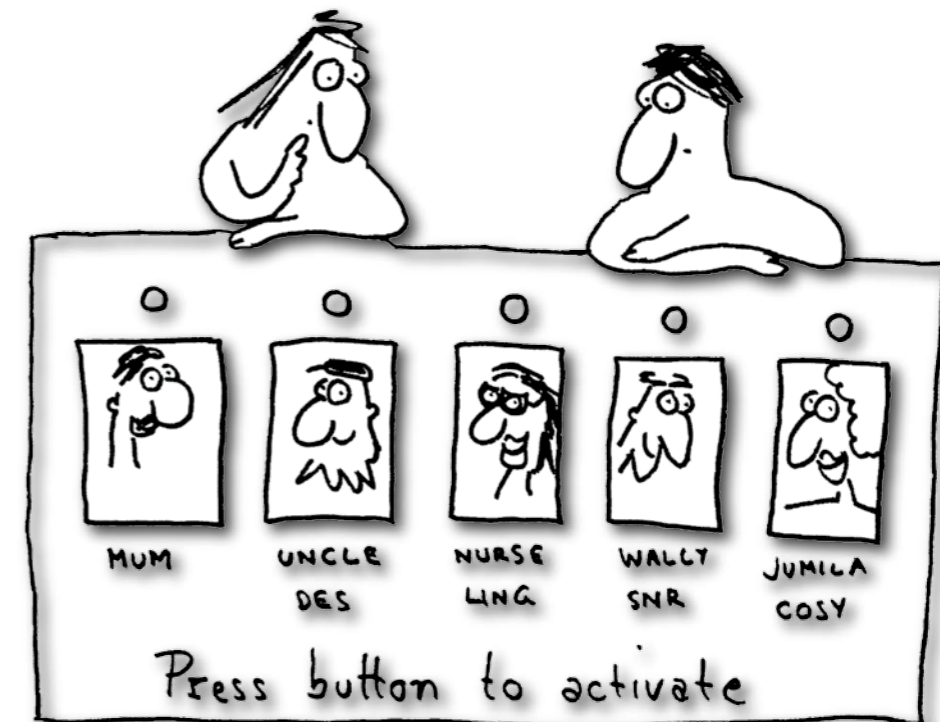
When you are a teenager, you have more freedom than when you were a kid. You are on the road to becoming an adult. The adults around you are beginning to trust you to look after yourself and to make your own way. More and more, you will make decisions for yourself about the things that are important to you.

With this freedom comes responsibility. What happens to your body and how you look after it are only part of the ride. You will encounter many new situations and new ideas: there's sex,

and love, and how to keep feeling good about yourself, and how to get on with people.

In this booklet, we've got together a heap of information so that you can read up on the important stuff.

Remember too that there are adults in your life, like your parents, teachers and school nurses, who'll be willing to listen and help you along the way.



What's inside this fact book

On the following pages, you will find information about sex, love and relationships.

Friends and relationships

- **Communication** (friends, mood swings, sorting stuff out) *see page 4*
- **Like? Like a lot? Love!** (love, crushes, falling in and falling out) *see page 5*
- **Types of relationships** (sexuality, heterosexual, homosexual) *see page 7*

Sex

- **Masturbation** *see page 9*
- **Sexual feelings** in relationships (kissing, reasons for physical involvement, pressure) *see page 9*
- **Sexual intercourse** (safe sex, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases) *see page 10*

- **Sex and the law** (age of consent) *see page 10*
- **Decisions about sex** (alternatives, is it right for you?) *see page 11*
- **Important things you need** to know about sex (consent, sexual abuse, sexual assault) *see page 11*

Getting pregnant

- **Contraception** (birth control) *see page 12*
- **Conception** (falling pregnant) *see page 12*
- **Being pregnant** *see page 14*
- **Birth** *see page 15*
- **After the birth** *see page 15*

Conclusion

- **Further information** *see page 16*

Friends and Relationships

During puberty, you experience lots of changes. Some of these are physical. Many are emotional. Each of you will be travelling at a different rate along the road to adulthood. Between the ages of 12 and 14, girls are often taller than boys, and their bodies may be developing into the women they are to become. By contrast boys, who will go on to become well-proportioned, deep-voiced, muscular adults, may still be short and skinny!

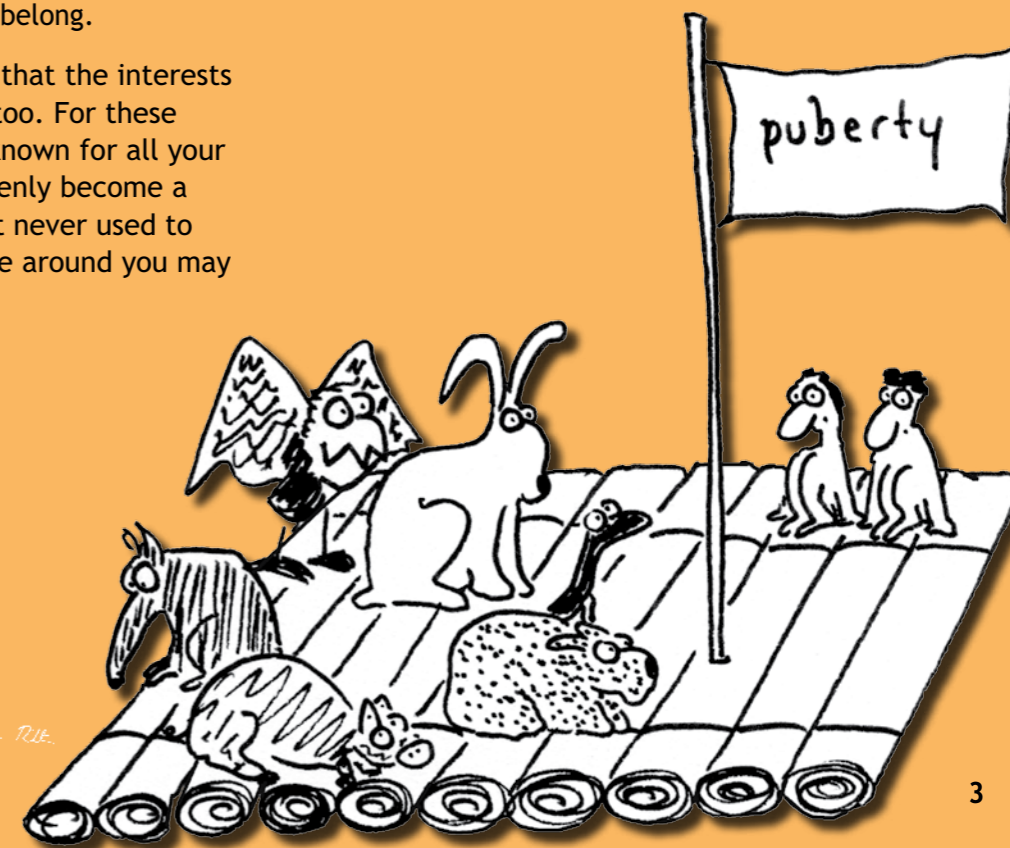
It all sorts itself out in the end, but in the beginning, there may be a mismatch of size and proportion amongst your friends that contributes to feelings that you no longer belong.

In adolescence, you will find that the interests of your friends start to vary too. For these reasons, someone you have known for all your primary school life may suddenly become a stranger to you as things that never used to matter suddenly do. Everyone around you may

start to have strong opinions about clothes, music, how you spend your free time, who you like, what you're good at, what is cool and what is not. These opinions may not always match your own.

All these strong-minded, opinionated people are marching in different ways on the road to adulthood. Each of you will get there in your own way.

In the end, the friends you stay close to will probably be those with whom you share the same values, interests and concerns, and the same ways of enjoying your spare time.



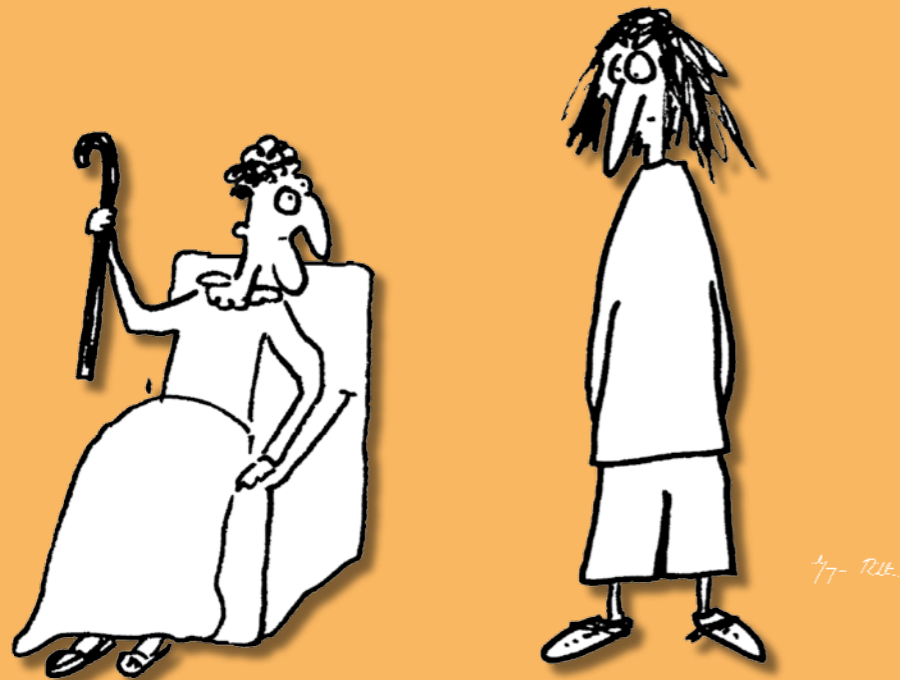
Communication

Being a teenager isn't always hard. There are wonderful freedoms associated with not having yet assumed all the responsibilities of adulthood. And there are many amazing things to discover and learn.

But with all the changes taking place in your life, you are bound to experience the full spectrum of mood swings: from confidence and exuberance, to loneliness and despair. This is a totally normal part of being a teenager. As well as your friends, you may find your relationships with different family members are changing too. People who you once got along with may no longer seem as close or as easy to be with as they once did.

The best way to sort out complex situations is through communication. Saying things aloud is a way of sorting out the good, the bad and the confusing. Without talk, there can be no resolution.

You may not find it easy to talk about how things are. But different people will be able to help you with different things. Try talking to someone who cares about you and who can support you to help you become the person you want to be. This might be a trusted and respected adult or friend, or your doctor, or a school counsellor. You can always call a telephone helpline, especially if you are having problems talking to your family (see contact details in the **Further information** section).



Like? Like a lot? Love!

As you become a sexual being, you may discover that the way you feel about different people becomes more complex too.

It is quite normal to suddenly experience strong feelings, or crushes, for certain people. These feelings may remain deliciously private and unexpressed. Or you may choose to express them to the person directly, or to confide in a friend.

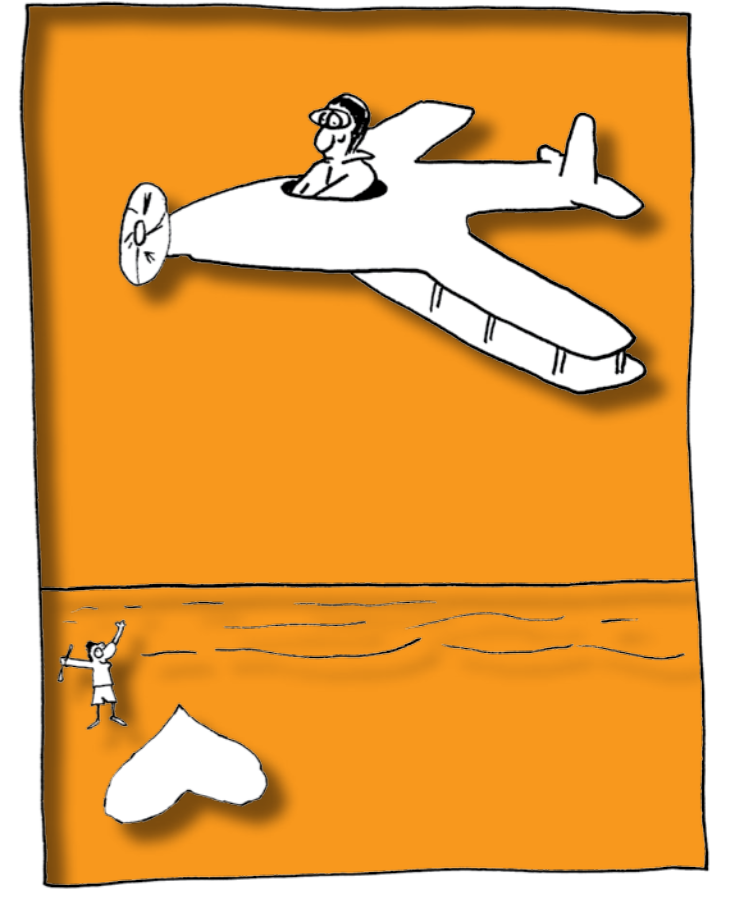
Speaking your feelings aloud puts you in a vulnerable space. If your feelings are not returned by the other person, you may feel exposed and rejected. Or, if they are reciprocated, you may find yourself in an exciting new friendship or relationship.

What if someone gets a crush on you?

You may find that someone feels strongly about you but that you don't return these feelings. Try to treat this person with dignity and respect and privacy. Be honest and clear about your feelings.

Will someone ever love me?

You may feel as if everyone around you is falling in love, or finding someone, except for you. It can be hard to be patient and wait your turn, even when, in all probability, you can be sure your turn will come. There are many years ahead for these things to happen, even though you may want them to happen now.



In the meantime, try to focus on those things which make you happy. Enjoy your own company. A happy, together person is the kind of person someone else will be attracted to.

Is it love?

The feeling of falling in love can be a wonderful one. It can affect your sleep, your appetite, your desire to do, or not do, different things. It can take over your whole world. But sometimes we just like someone a lot.

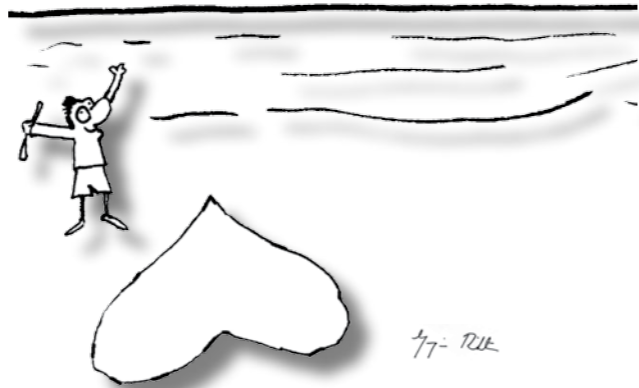
How do you know if it is really love? You can ask:

- Do you both care about each other to the same degree?
- Do you have things in common, and enjoy similar activities?
- Do you share similar broad values (about family, morals, beliefs etc)?
- Do you encourage each other to pursue your own interests?
- Can you talk to each other about important things?
- Do you feel understood and heard?
- Do you understand and listen to your partner?

What if my heart gets broken?

Just as you have fallen in love, it is also possible for you, or the other person, to fall out of love. Most people fall in love more than once before they find a long-term partner who is ready to fully share the emotional journey of loving and being loved.

When you are emotionally hurt, it is important to be kind to yourself, and to distract yourself with things that make you feel good. Try to talk to the people around you who care about you. You may find perspective, consolation and useful advice from hearing the heartbreak experiences of others.



Types of relationships

From the moment you are born, you have different kinds of relationships and connections with those around you: parents, siblings, friends, aunts, uncles, grandparents, teachers and role models.

The nature of these bonds will depend on the precise connection between you. It may involve dependence, responsibility, equality, respect, or a combination of any of these.

From each of these bonds you will learn by observation and practice:

- How other people behave towards each other.
- How other people behave towards you.
- How other people expect you to behave.

You also receive many messages about human relationships from books, movies, TV and other media.



What is sexuality?

As you grow up, you begin to make choices and decisions about how you want to behave in the relationships that are important to you. As you develop sexual feelings, you may also feel ready to express your affection and love through a sexual relationship.

The way people express their sexual feelings is called sexuality. Different cultures view sexuality differently. Certain sexual practices and standards vary from country to country, religion to religion, and culture to culture.

What is heterosexuality?

The word heterosexual means a person who has emotional and sexual feelings towards a person of the opposite sex. Heterosexual men are attracted to women and heterosexual women are attracted to men.

What is homosexuality?

People who have sexual and romantic feelings towards people of the same sex as themselves are homosexual. This means women are attracted to women, and men are attracted to men. Another word for homosexual is gay (used most often for men) and lesbian (used for women).

What is bisexuality?

The word bisexual is used to describe a person who is sexually attracted to people of either sex.

Gender stereotypes

Narrow, fixed expectations about being a male or being a female are called gender stereotypes. For example, there are stereotypes about males being 'tough' and females being 'soft'. In fact, most people don't fit into gender stereotypes and there is enormous variation in gender roles. In adolescence, as people develop into mature males and females, girls and boys who don't fit the stereotype are sometimes picked on by

others. This can be very hurtful. Remember, the differences between us all are what make humans wonderful and unique.

Homophobia

Homophobia is fear or hostility towards people who are homosexual. Homophobia is sometimes expressed through bullying or insulting people who appear to be different, whether or not they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. Any kind of bullying is totally unacceptable and a healthy sexuality includes tolerance and understanding of people who are different or who don't fit into stereotypes.

Who can help me work out what I am?

It can sometimes be lonely and confusing to feel attracted to people of the same sex, or to have sexual feelings which seem to differ from those of everyone around you. Your confusion may be particularly hard to deal with while you are still defining who you are, and at a time when the opinions of others count for so much

Remember that some of the other people around you will be going through the same stuff as you, you just may not know about it. And remember that communication and talking through things is the best way to become the person you want to be. Support and information about these kinds of questions is available from the Freedom Centre (see **Further information** section).

As you become a sexual being, it is natural that you will want to learn to use your new body. And as you do, you will discover what you like, what makes you feel good, satisfied, happy and safe.

Sexuality

Masturbation

One way that people express and explore their sexual feelings is by masturbation. Girls may touch their clitoris. Boys may touch their penis. Some people don't masturbate at all, or hardly ever. Other people masturbate more often.

When a person is masturbating, they become more and more sexually excited. They may then reach a peak of sexual excitement which is called having an orgasm, or coming. In this moment, all the tension and excitement that has built up is suddenly released. Boys ejaculate when they have an orgasm and their penis then goes limp.

For many people, masturbation is often their first sexual experience. So long as it does not hurt you or anyone else, and is done in private, masturbation is normal and healthy.

Sexual feelings in relationships

When you are sexually attracted to someone else, and they are attracted to you, you will usually reach a point where this attraction is expressed physically. For example, you may kiss and cuddle and hold hands, or you may feel each other's bodies through or beneath your clothes, or stroke or touch each other's genitals. People who are physically attracted may eventually decide to have sexual intercourse. However, there are lots of ways to be sexual together that do not involve

sexual intercourse. It is wise to develop a long-term trusting relationship and abstain from sex until you are both sure you are ready for it.

How do I learn how to kiss?

When you are with someone you like a lot, kissing is fun. You may wonder how you are going to know what to do, but don't worry: you will work it out together, and improve with practice.

Keep the lines of communication open

Sex and love are not the same thing. It is possible to have strong feelings of love and affection for someone and not want to get sexually involved with them. And the opposite is also true: it is possible to be physically involved with someone in a sexual way, without love being a part of it at all. You may be sexually involved with someone out of curiosity, or because you think it will make you feel good, or bring you closer to the other person.

When you are physically sexually involved with someone, it is important that you talk to the other person about what you are doing together. Sexual involvement with someone else can change how you feel about them and about yourself. Make sure that they feel happy and comfortable, and that you tell them if you feel uncomfortable or unhappy with the level of physical involvement. If you feel under any sort of pressure, then it is important to stop what you are doing.

Sexual intercourse

During heterosexual intercourse, a male's erect penis goes inside a female's vagina. This is often called having sex or making love. For many people, making love can be enjoyable and fulfilling. For some people, it may be the way they can most show their love for each other.

The dangers of unsafe sex

Sex may be enjoyable but there can be serious, life-altering consequences if you do not have safe sex.

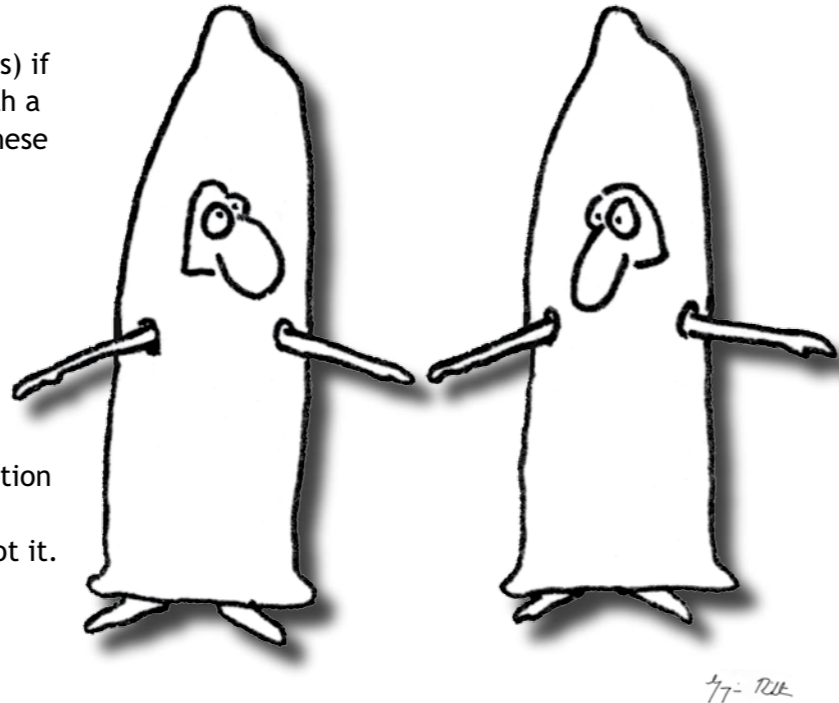
1. A girl can become pregnant from having unprotected sex.
2. Both boys and girls can catch serious sexually transmitted infections (diseases) if they have unsafe sexual intercourse with a person who already has an infection. These infections include:
 - chlamydia
 - gonorrhoea
 - syphilis
 - HIV (the virus which causes AIDS).

Asking someone if they are free from infection is not enough. The person carrying the infection cannot always tell if they have got it.

Sex and the law

Just because you want to have sex does not mean you can. In Australia, it is against the law to have sex - either heterosexual or homosexual - if either partner is under 16 years of age. This is the case regardless of whether both of you consent.

For further information about what is legal and what is not, see **Important things to know about sex**.



Decisions about sex

Is sex right for you?

Sex may not be right for you just because everyone around you is doing it, or because you think you should. If you have sex because you are pressured, drunk, or curious, you may regret it later.

It is good to have a clear sense of what you want before you go beyond your comfort zone. When to have sex is one of the very important decisions in your life. Don't be in a hurry to make this decision. There is nothing wrong with taking your time and saying no to things that make you feel uncomfortable or unsure. You may find it helps to talk with a parent or a trusted adult.

You may feel happy expressing your affection for someone just by kissing, cuddling and caressing. It is quite normal for couples to enjoy this kind of closeness and affection long before they are ready for intercourse.

Remember, life is long! The best sex will be the sex where both partners are equally ready.

Some things to think about if you are considering having sex:

- Am I doing this because it's what I want? If your partner is constantly trying to encourage you to have sex, you need to think about whether he or she really cares for, or is truly listening to you.

- The risk of sexually transmitted infections. Is sex going to be safe? Have you got condoms?
- The risk of pregnancy. Is sex going to be safe? Have you got condoms? Do you need to use other forms of contraception? (Also see **Getting Pregnant**).

Important things to know about sex

Remember, in Australia it is against the law to have sex - either heterosexual or homosexual - if either person is under 16 years of age.

It is against the law to force anyone to have sex against their wishes. This includes any kind of sexual touching, or looking at sexual pictures.

It is against the law to give people alcohol or drugs to get them drunk or drugged so they have sex.

People have every right to change their mind about sex halfway through and choose not to continue even though they agreed at the start.

Forcing someone to have sex or to do sexual things against their will is called sexual abuse or sexual assault. If this happens to you, tell a parent, teacher, counsellor, school nurse or other trusted adult.

Getting Pregnant

When a penis enters a vagina during intercourse, it is possible for the girl to get pregnant. This is the case even if:

- She has not had her first period.
- The boy withdraws his penis from her vagina before ejaculating.
- The girl is having her period.
- It is the first time she has had sexual intercourse.



Missed periods

The first sign a girl may be pregnant is when her period doesn't come when she expects it to. If this happens, it is very important to see a doctor or talk to an adult as soon as possible.

Contraception (birth control)

The safest and surest way to prevent a pregnancy during sexual intercourse is to use contraception. If you decide to have sex, it is very important to talk together about what you might choose for contraception and then to use it when you have sex. The responsibility for contraception ought to be shared equally.

Options for boys include condoms, which help prevent sexually transmitted infections during sex. Options for girls include the contraceptive pill, which must be taken each day and is available by prescription from a doctor. No contraceptive method can be 100% guaranteed. It is therefore important to be informed about the range of contraception available and to weigh up the risks attached to each one.

The human body is sophisticated, and geared towards reproduction. For contraception to be effective, it must be used in the way it is intended.



Conception (falling pregnant)

Around 14 days before a girl's period is due, her ovaries release an egg. This point of the menstrual cycle is called ovulation. Ovulation is the ideal time for a pregnancy to occur if a man and woman have unprotected penis-to-vagina intercourse.

During sex, when a man ejaculates (comes, reaches climax, orgasms) inside a woman's vagina, about one teaspoon of semen - containing millions of sperm - is released into the vagina. The sperm swim into the uterus and fallopian tubes. If just one sperm implants itself into the released egg, fertilisation occurs. If the fertilised egg implants in the wall of the uterus, conception occurs and a new human life begins.

The above conditions are ideal for conception. But it is quite possible for a woman to fall pregnant even if:

- Sex occurs at another time in the menstrual cycle.
- The man has not ejaculated (this is because sperm is also present in the pre-cum, the clear fluid released from the penis prior to ejaculation).
- Any semen, including pre-cum, is deposited in or just outside the vagina.
- She has not had an orgasm during intercourse.

Being pregnant

How does someone know if they are pregnant?

An egg that has been successfully fertilised by a sperm remains in the lining of the uterus. Rather than being shed, this lining stays to nourish the egg. Therefore, the woman does not have her usual period. A missed period can be the first sign of pregnancy. Because pregnancy dates from the time of the last period, a woman might be four, five, six or more weeks pregnant before she realises it. She may not experience other physical symptoms (such as fatigue, nausea and breast tenderness) until a little later.

Decisions about pregnancy

Deciding to get pregnant is perhaps the most important decision a couple can make. An unexpected, unplanned pregnancy places enormous pressure and anxiety on the couple involved. If someone discovers they are unexpectedly pregnant, it is important to seek help as quickly as possible. They will need to talk to people close to them and/or health professionals who can advise them of the full range of options, considerations and choices.

What happens during pregnancy?

It takes 40 weeks (approximately 280 days, or 9 months) for a baby to be ready to leave its mother's womb. During this time it remains in its mother's uterus, protected by a watery sac and nourished by a placenta. During the first 8 weeks the baby is called an embryo. After that, it is called a foetus.

The placenta, attached to the inner wall of the uterus, develops with and nourishes the baby. The placenta is also attached to the foetus, by the umbilical cord. All the oxygen and nourishment the foetus needs comes through this cord. The umbilical cord also carries waste products away from the foetus. Waste products are returned to the woman's circulatory system and are passed out through her lungs and kidneys as part of her normal body functions.

During the pregnancy, the woman's circulatory system is separate from the blood system of the foetus. But even so, everything she does during this time can have a direct impact on the wellbeing of the baby. During pregnancy, it is very important for the mother to

- Eat healthy food.
- Not misuse alcohol or drugs.

Birth

The baby is born about 40 weeks after the last period. The average newborn baby is about 45-50 cm long and weighs between 3 and 4 kilos.

Once the baby has been born, the doctor or midwife ties or clamps the umbilical cord and cuts it about 5cm from the baby's tummy. The short piece left attached to the baby dries up and usually drops off within a few days. The place where it was attached heals and becomes the navel (umbilicus, or bellybutton).

After the Birth

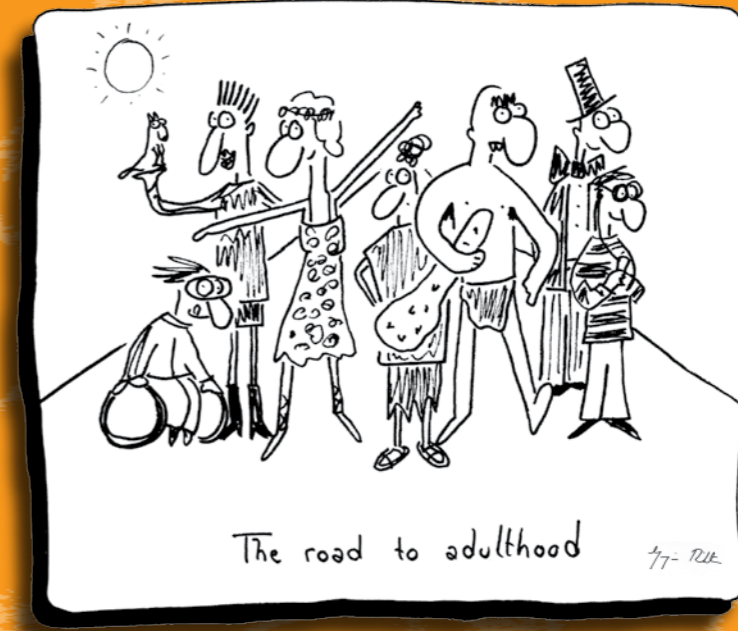
A newborn baby is utterly helpless and dependent on those responsible for it, all day, every day. It needs parents and carers who will love it and put its needs before their own for many years.



Conclusion

Adolescence is a time of many changes. During this time, you will feel happiest and grow to your full potential if you remain true to yourself and true to your own personal goals and desires.

Don't forget that there are people around who care for you and who will be willing to offer you advice or counsel. You'll make it through adolescence one way or another, but you don't have to do the hard bits alone if you don't want to.



Original cartoons by Georgia Richter

Further information

If you have any sort of problem you want to talk about confidentially with a trained counsellor
Kids Help Line - (24 hours) - 1800 55 1800

A great site with lots of answers for
10 to 12 year olds, especially about puberty
The Hormone Factory
www.thehormonefactory.com

A good site for teenagers
Queensland Health Youth Site
www.health.qld.gov.au/istaysafe

A good site for sexuality education
www.avert.org

For general health information
HealthInfo - 1300 135 030
Free pamphlets and information
www.population.health.wa.gov.au/ordering/

For information about sexual health and contraception
Sexual Health Helpline - (08) 9227 6178.
Country callers - 1800 198 205
www.fpwa.org.au

If you have been sexually abused or assaulted
Sexual Assault Resource Centre (24 hours)
(08) 9340 1828. Country callers - 1800 199 888

The Freedom Centre provides information for
young people who are questioning their sexuality.
(08) 9228 0354



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