My changing body

Year: Y3

Subjects and Issues

Growing and changing Personal hygiene Puberty Relationships education Periods Menstruation Relationships Body changes National Curriculum science - relationships elements

Before the lesson

NB: the Science National Curriculum statement associated with this lesson is from the Y5 Programme of Study. However, it is not uncommon for menstruation to begin before that age. Girls can start their periods as young as 8 years old, so it is strongly recommended that children learn about periods from Y3/P4. You are best placed to decide whether to introduce the lesson at this age or leave for Y4/P5, alongside the SCARF lesson that follows on from it, entitled *Preparing for changes at puberty.*

Some teachers have reported to us that they have successfully delivered this lesson towards the end of Y3/P4, rather than earlier in the year. In response to feedback from teachers, we have also added new content related to puberty changes including male puberty too.

Using a Question Box

Note also: the nature of this subject may prompt lots of questions from children in your class (in particular the girls). There may be some children who don't feel confident to ask a question that they have, given the sensitive nature of the subject. To help with this, consider using a Question Box so that children can ask questions anonymously and be sure that their concerns are addressed in this safe way. See the film (in Resources needed area) on how to use the Question Box.

Introduction

Ask the children to think about how kittens are born [come from their mummy's tummy/womb, between 1-8 born at the same time.] Explain that adult female cats will have a special place in their bodies called a womb or uterus. This is where the kittens grow before they are ready to be born.

Explain that humans are like kittens. They are both mammals.

Mammals grow babies inside the mother until they are ready to be born. Babies are made from two seeds; an egg from the female and a sperm from the male. Female humans normally release one egg [maybe two to create non–identical twins; identical twins occur when a sperm fertilises an egg and then the fertilised egg splits in half to create two identical babies.] Male humans can release up to 300 million sperm, but only one will fertilise the egg.

Explain that we are going to learn about eggs and what happens to them when the egg from a female *doesn't* meet a sperm to make a baby.

Activity 1 - Puberty changes

Start by asking the children what they remember from lessons about their bodies in Year 2. [That the girls and boys bodies are different, that we have private parts of the body]. Can they remember why boys and girls bodies are different? [So that if a person wants to, they can create a baby when they are older.]

Next, ask:

- Can anyone tell us what else happens to the body before someone can create a baby? [Girls: breasts develop, hips widen, periods start, get taller, get bigger, may get spots, greasy hair, more body hair, genitals mature. Boys: get taller, get bigger, may get spots, greasy hair, have more body hair including facial hair, the voice deepens, genitals mature.]
- Can anyone tell us what this change is called? [Puberty]
- Can anyone remember what parts of the body are needed to create a baby? [Testicles/Sperm and Ovaries/Eggs.]
- What are the testicles for? [From puberty they make and store the sperm that helps make a baby]
- Where do girls store their eggs? [They have something similar called ovaries which store the eggs but they are kept inside their body between the hips above the womb. Girls are born with their eggs already in the ovaries, but they are only released once they start puberty.]

Explain to the children that when a boy reaches puberty; ***anytime from the age of 9, but usually around 10-12 years old,*** their testicles start to make and store sperm. Sometimes the sperm leaves the body at night via the penis. This is often called a wet dream and is totally normal if you have them and totally normal if you don't.

When a girl reaches puberty, ***anytime from the age of eight, though most commonly at about the age of 12,*** she can start releasing eggs. These eggs are released inside her. Distribute the *Female internal reproductive organs and Male internal reproductive organs* Activity sheets (see Resources needed area).

Using the labelled IWB resource (see Resources needed area) ask the children to label their activity sheets using the IWB as a guide. (NB: the IWB resource contains a second slide showing the male internal reproductive organs. It will be useful to use this if questions about boys' internal reproductive organs arise, particularly to explain how the testicles are linked to the penis by a tube which the sperm uses to leave the body.)

NB: use the **Puberty Glossary** (in the Resources needed area) for reference if necessary.

Activity 2 - Menstrual Cycle

Using the image on the IWB explain that inside every female are ***ovaries*** that contain tiny eggs (the word Ovum is Latin for egg) and that about once a month, when a female has reached puberty she releases one egg from an ovary. This egg travels along the ***fallopian tube*** towards the ***uterus (womb)***.

In preparation for the egg, the ***lining of the uterus*** thickens. But if the egg is not fertilized inside the female's body (it doesn't meet the male seed - the ***sperm)*** the lining isn't needed and so the woman/girl passes this lining, in the form of blood, along with the tiny egg, out through her ***vagina***.

This monthly 'bleed' is called a period and lasts approximately 3 – 7 days.

Reassure the children that the amount of blood in total is small – only about 3-5 tablespoons. Explain that this is all perfectly normal and shows that a girl's body is getting ready for adulthood and will enable her to have a baby if she wants to.

You can show the clip of menstruation from the Kidshealth website to illustrate this cycle: **view this film here. (http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/menstruation.html)**

Distribute the *Menstruation cycle* Activity sheet and ask the children to cut out the 4 pictures, then glue them onto a blank piece of paper in the right order. [The correct order is B, D, A, C]

Ask whether anyone can explain what a girl or woman could use to protect her clothes when she is having a period? (Period/menstruation pads, tampons or maybe even menstruation cups. You can use the Puberty glossary to explain pads and tampons. Menstruation cups are plastic devices that women can place inside their vagina to collect period blood. See Mooncup.co.uk for more information. It needs to be emptied regularly, just the same as changing a pad or tampon on a regular basis for safety reasons associated with toxic shock syndrome.)

Use the images of period Products on the IWB or bring examples to show the children. You may find it useful to know that the DfE is running a **Period Product scheme (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england)** where you can order a range of period products and have them delivered free of charge.

Explain the need for extra care to be taken by girls at this time of the month - regular changing of pads (or other items used to protect clothing) and to change underwear regularly.

Explain, too, that the hormones (chemicals) which cause the changes at puberty also make a person's sweat glands more active. This means that the person needs to wash more regularly.

Plenary

Summarise by explaining that both wet dreams and periods are a normal part of growing up and show that a girl's body is working as it should. It is nothing to be ashamed of and most of us wouldn't be here if it wasn't for sperm, eggs and periods (recognising that some children may be IVF babies).

Extension (optional)

Children could go home and talk to their parents about what they remember about when they first started puberty, and how they felt.

Learning Outcomes

Children will be able to:

- Recognise that babies come from the joining of an egg and sperm;
- Explain what happens when an egg doesn't meet a sperm;
- Understand that for girls, periods are a normal part of puberty.