

Little children experience no shame in exposing their bodies. In fact they are often proud to do so. They will outgrow this tendency. One must be careful not to injure the sensibility of a child nor make it prudish by harsh methods of inculcating a sense of modesty. Severe criticism may even make the child a pervert who will later indulge in exhibitionism.

FOR ADOLESCENTS

THE word "Puberty" is derived from the Latin "pubes" meaning down or soft hairs. Hair grows more rapidly on other parts of the body than the head, and this is especially noticeable in the beard on youths who begin shaving soon after they reach the age of puberty, and hair grows also about the genital organs. The age in girls begins about 12 and in boys about 14. Important changes take place within the body. The heart grows more rapidly than the arteries, causing general disturbances of the blood-circulatory system. Blushing, frequent nose-bleed in some young people, headache, anemia, cold hands and feet, and loss of appetite or varying appetite, also pimples and blackheads, are of frequent occurrence. The breasts of girls begin to develop.

The greatest change in girls is the coming of "the monthly period" or flow of blood from the vagina. Normally this occurs once in each lunar month, or thirteen times a year, although frequently it is irregular even in normal women. It continues until the menopause is reached between the ages of 45 and 52. It is caused by the breaking away of an ovum or egg from one of the ovaries, and indicates that the girl has now come to the age when she may become a mother. These menses are often accompanied by discomfort or pain, and a girl needs to be especially careful during the few days of menstruation. More rest is required, care in exercise and diet, and freedom from mental worry and fright. Neglect of the rules of hygiene at this time may cause nervousness, irregularity, and unnecessary pain.

For boys the most startling change is the seminal emission, usually during sleep, accompanied by an erotic dream and widely known as "a wet dream." For some time before this the sex organs have been enlarging, and at times the penis becomes erect and hard. Finally a quantity of semen which has been collecting, breaks from the glands and is discharged from the body. Thereafter, from time to time, these emissions occur. A boy who has not been instructed about this beforehand, may be frightened and think something is wrong with him. Therefore, he should be told what to expect.

In warm climates boys and girls mature sooner than in very cold ones. But even under the same climatic conditions some girls menstruate as early as 11 years of age, and some as late as 18, yet both are normal and healthy.

Adolescents frequently are self-conscious and bashful, especially in the presence of the opposite sex. When a mother endeavors to explain such a matter as menstruation to her daughter she may be met with an icy indifference. Yet the same girl may seek an intimacy with an older and more experienced girl friend, from whom she will learn many things, and a strong attachment may be formed between them. Boys at the age of puberty are likely to travel in gangs, and those who are girl-shy will learn about girls from the more forward boys in the crowd.

It is well for boys and girls to learn the correct names for the genital organs, so that there will be less excuse for them to use "dirty words" that indicate lack of breeding and decency. The proper names are easily learned and should be used in all discussions of the subject. The vocabularies of all peoples are rich in terms for the sex organs and sexual intercourse. Most of them are libidinous and obscene. It is said that in the French language of the sixteenth century there were more than three hundred words to describe sexual relations, and more than four hundred words to indicate the sex organs of man and woman. Modern American slang is fraught with such terms. For the male organs the correct words are penis, glans, testicles, semen or spermatozoa, erection, ejaculation. In the case of