

## PREPARING FOR PUBERTY

Kids grow up, sometimes faster than we like. Puberty occurs between 9 and 13 years for girls and from 10 to 14 years for boys. Puberty is a time of rapid physical and emotional changes. Your pre-teen may feel excited or embarrassed about their new body, worried about being normal, happy to be growing up, confused about sexual feelings and experiencing mood swings. Here are some things you can do to assist your child to be prepared for puberty:

- ◆ Don't wait until you notice changes in your child's body before you start discussing puberty. Changes will be well underway before you see anything.
- ◆ Children are ready for information on puberty by the time they are 9 or 10 years old. Even though your child may not be in puberty, chances are someone around him/her is.
- ◆ Puberty occurs at different rates for everyone – assure your child that puberty will occur when the time is right for him/her.
- ◆ Explain the changes that are similar for boys and girls and those that are different.
- ◆ Assist your child to cope with puberty. Puberty is hard work and his/her body will require more sleep, good nutrition, good coping patterns and extra attention to hygiene.
- ◆ As many children and adolescents are uncomfortable with their changing bodies, respect the need for privacy and independence.
- ◆ Be a positive role model.

Your local public library and health unit has books, videos and other resources on puberty and sexual health.

For more information contact:

- ◆ Your local Health Unit
- ◆ BC Nurse Line (1-866-215-4700) a free call
- ◆ Child, Youth and Family Community Health

[www.viha.ca/prevention\\_services/healthy\\_choices.htm](http://www.viha.ca/prevention_services/healthy_choices.htm)

### Health Units

Esquimalt	250-360-5600
Salt Spring Island	250-538-4880
Outer Gulf Islands	250-539-3099
Sooke	250-642-5464
Peninsula	250-544-2400
Victoria	250-388-2200
Saanich	250-519-5100
West Shore	250-478-1757

## “Screen” Time Can Be Harmful To Your Children’s Health

Screen time, which is time spent watching TV, surfing the net, playing video or computer games has been linked with numerous detrimental effects to our children’s health.

- ◆ Children who watch more TV eat more calories and drink more pop
- ◆ Children who watch TV eat more low nutrient, high calorie foods
- ◆ Research shows the strongest predictor of childhood obesity is the number of hours spent watching TV, surfing the net, or playing computer or video games
- ◆ Academic achievement drops sharply for children who watch more than 10 hours of TV a week
- ◆ TV interferes with the development of intelligence, thinking and imagination skills
- ◆ TV interferes with language development
- ◆ TV impedes development of longer attention spans
- ◆ Certain types of TV cultivate aggressive or violent behaviours

The new recommendations for physical activity are for children to accumulate 90 minutes of physical activity every day in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight and for proper gross and fine motor development.

Research shows that physical activity in three 10-minute sessions is just as effective as one 30-minute session. Health experts recommend parents assist their children to gradually increase physical activity and decrease TV time in 30 minute segments until they are being physically active for 90 minutes and watching no more than 2 hours of TV a day.

Encourage your children to do alternate activities such as:

- ◆ Play outdoor or indoor games
- ◆ Go for a walk or hike as a family everyday before or after dinner
- ◆ Take advantage of after school programs
- ◆ Find an activity or sport they like to do and sign them up for a group at the local recreation centre

**For more information contact:**

- ◆ [www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)
- ◆ [www.healthcanada.ca/paguide](http://www.healthcanada.ca/paguide)
- ◆ [www.limittv.org](http://www.limittv.org)