

**PUBERTY**

# Puberty

Puberty is characterized by a number of changes that can adversely affect the pleasure that teenage girls derive from being active. Certain inconveniences associated with puberty can become quite apparent during PHE classes, when many teenage girls realize that their body is changing. They might have the impression that people are constantly watching them and feel very vulnerable. This unpleasant situation can lead them to skip subsequent courses and favour the bench over the proposed activity to avoid feeling uncomfortable again.

## Important

- 1 Many teenage girls are concerned about the changes in their body at puberty. Let's not make light of those concerns.
- 2 If you are not at ease discussing these subjects, identify colleagues that teenage girls can turn to if they have any questions, need advice or want to speak to someone.
- 3 In PHE courses, adopt a respectful attitude towards body differences and the variable pace at which students grow, and use caring and non-discriminatory language.

## Breasts

Two common concerns about breasts:

- bouncing
- shyness about changing in front of others.

While some girls prefer to do without, a sports bra can be as important as footwear when it comes to feeling at ease, comfortable and confident about getting active!



## Body Hair

Teenage girls can be self-conscious about body hair. Shorts, bathing suits and T-shirts can expose parts of the body that they would rather hide.



## Sweating

Teenage girls regularly cite the lack of time as an obstacle to the practice of a physical activity. But, above and beyond the minutes invested in practicing the activity, what they want is more time to freshen up afterwards.



## Menstruation

In addition to the pain and generalized discomfort that girls often experience during their periods or premenstrual phase of their cycle, heavier bleeding can occur during physical exertion. Getting active while respecting the needs and limitations of one's body can help alleviate certain symptoms, but it can take years to come to this conclusion. Showing empathy when a teenage girl wants to stay on the bench is of the utmost importance, therefore. Rather than make her feel inadequate, listening to her and respecting the way she feels may lead her, over time, to view the PHE course as an activity that helps her feel better.



## Paths for reflection

- Is the time interval following the PHE course sufficient for girls who want to freshen up before going to their next class?
- Does the course dress code allow teenage girls to wear the clothes that they prefer (leggings, long-sleeve shirt, sweat pants, etc.)?
- Does the list of school supplies include suggestions for parents concerning what their teenage girl may need to feel comfortable and confident about engaging in PHE
  - sports bra
  - personal hygiene kit
  - etc.
- Does the school locker room have a sufficient number of cabins for those who want to change in private? Is the premises clean, welcoming and safe?
- Do teenage girls who participate in lunchtime activities have permission to eat lunch during an afternoon class if the time used to freshen up leaves them with no time to eat?
- Does the school offer extracurricular activities after regular class hours so that students can participate, but also freshen up somewhere other than at school, if they prefer?

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