



All your embas 100%



Pretty much everyone has had a freak-out moment about their body – like, wait, is this normal? Trying to get an answer online can lead to a downward spiral of self-diagnosing yourself with a WAY unlikely disease. And there are some things you would really rather not ask your friends about. “Hey, did you watch last night’s *PLL*? By the way, do you ever smell, um, fishy?” We enlist the help of Dr Kathy McCoy, co-author of *The Teenage Body Book*, to get to the bottom of everything you wanna know about your body.

LUMPS, BUMPS AND NIPPLE PROBS

From ages eight to 17, you can expect some pretty wierd things happen to your boobs, none of which you need to freak out about. Firstly, they don’t start off perfectly rounded. “At first, they are cone-shaped. The nipple and the circular area around the nipple (the areola) seem to be somewhat separate. But that’s normal, you are not deformed,” Dr McCoy says. “That’s just a stage and they’ll round out later.” As if that isn’t awks enough, a lot of the time your boobs don’t grow at the same rate – one may be noticeably bigger than the other. “Sometimes a little variation in breast size is lifelong, but if there is a dramatic difference, it will right itself in time.”

Like most stuff, breast size tends to be genetic, so have a look at the women in your family for an indication of how big you can expect your boobs to grow (or not grow). And while they’re growing, expect some bumps along the way – literally. “Having bumps on the areola is normal,” Dr McCoy reassures.

Something else you don’t need to freak out about: having an inverted nipple. Yep, it happens. The exception is if your nipples weren’t inverted and then suddenly one does invert. If that’s the case, you should probably get a doctor check it out.

Trassing body questions ANSWERED

Spoiler alert: You are totally normal.

HAIR EVERY-FREAKING-WHERE

Besides rando nipple hairs, you may also notice some hair above your lip or on your chin. "This does not mean you are turning into a boy," Dr McCoy says. "It's entirely normal, especially for people of certain ethnicities." However, if you do notice male-pattern hair growth that is coupled with irregular periods, Dr McCoy suggests chatting with a GP about it. That still doesn't mean you're turning into a dude, but it may indicate the onset of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), which is treatable. Stray hairs are one thing, but armpit and pubic hair is a whole other issue. For pubic hair particularly, everyone seems to have an opinion on whether it's best to shave it, wax it, or just leave it alone. Good news: it literally does not matter. "It's a matter of personal taste," Dr McCoy says. Your pubic hair has no effect on the health of your vagina, so what you want to do with it is completely up to you.

WHAT 'DELICATE FLOWER'?

When it comes to vaginas, Dr McCoy says while internally they pretty much all look the same, on the outside, there can be some differences. "Some teens worry because their inner labia extends past their outer labia, but that is not abnormal," she says. Size varies, too. Some girls have a thick outer labia while others have a thinner one.

If you're looking at everything up close with a hand mirror and are trying to find your hymen, don't freak out if you can't see it. "It's evident for some people and for some people it's not," Dr McCoy says.

For many girls, the hymen wears away without them even noticing. But it's also possible for the hymen to stay intact until first-time sex. "If your hymen breaks during sex, it could be a little painful or you could bleed a little," Dr McCoy says. "But the loss of your hymen is not the same thing as the loss of your virginity." When it comes to keeping things clean, Dr McCoy says there is absolutely no need to douche or use a deodorant spray. Washing the

outside with soap or body wash is enough. And even if you do shower every day, a faintly fishy scent is normal. If you are self-conscious about the smell, Dr McCoy says to make sure you are wearing cotton underwear and clothes that aren't very tight. If the smell is particularly strong and you feel itchy or uncomfortable, you

might want to ask your doctor about it to find out if you have an infection – which if you do, is 100 per cent curable and not a big deal at all.

It's also normal to notice a discharge in your underwear, particularly if it's whitish, clear with a little mucus. "The

vagina uses that to self-clean itself, particularly around ovulation," Dr McCoy says. But again, anything itchy, totally uncomfortable or a change in colour/consistency could be a sign of a minor infection, which you can see a GP for. As you can see, your body changes a lot during your teen years. But while some things may take you by surprise, none of it is anything to be worried or embarrassed about. And hey, at least everyone's in it together!

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