

8: Reproductive Health - Part 1



Purpose:

To identify the major structures and functions of the male and female reproductive systems in preparation for later understanding and discussion of STDs, HIV, and teen pregnancy with peers.

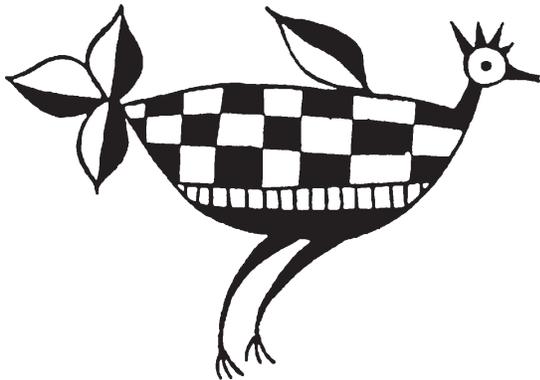
Stages of Change Process:

Getting information

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, Native STAND members will be able to:

1. Identify the major structures and functions of parts of the male and female reproductive systems.
2. Explain the physical changes that occur during puberty.
3. Cite the phases of a woman's menstrual cycle.
4. Describe recommended male and female hygiene practices.



Supplies/Materials:

- Chart paper, markers, masking tape

Resources/Handouts:

	RM	PM	HO
Words of Wisdom	●		
“What Do Ya Know?” Quiz	●	●	
Male & Female Reproductive Systems	●	●	
Big Changes: Stages of Adolescent Development	●	●	
The Menstrual Cycle	●	●	
When a Woman Has Her Moon	●	●	
Douching FAQs	●	●	
“I Didn’t Know That!” - Male Reproductive Health Issues	●	●	
Answers to “What Do Ya Know?” Quiz	●		

Preparation:

- You will need a second room and

THINKING AHEAD:
Grade quizzes for Session 9

1. Welcome/Overview

3-5 minutes, large group lecture, adult or teen co-facilitator

- Review Session 7: Healthy Relationships - Part 1.
- Answer any questions in the Question Box.
- Read today's WOW.

**There are many paths to a meaningful sense
of the natural world.**

Blackfoot

- Introduce today's session
 - ◇ In this session and the next, we will be looking at reproductive health issues. For some this will be a review, for others it will be a learning opportunity.
 - ◇ Remind them that no one has all the answers and it's never wrong to ask—if they have a question about something, there's probably someone else in the room that has the same question. If they are too embarrassed to ask it, they can always put a question in the Question Box.
 - ◇ We'll have fun—as always—but it's important to be respectful and not make crude or crass comments as we go through the session.
 - ◇ To ensure that students can maximize the learning opportunities in today's session, we will do this session separately for the boys and the girls. The exact same information will be covered, but we will do them separately to make sure everyone is comfortable and can get their questions answered without embarrassmen.
 - ◇ Break the students into two groups by sex.

Note: If there are transgendered students in the group, encourage them to go with the group that they would be most comfortable with.

2. “What Do Ya Know?” Quiz

10-15 minutes, individual work, adult facilitator

- Refer students to What Do Ya Know in the PM.
- Ask them to put their names on the papers so that you can return them to the right person next session.
- Give them a fixed amount of time to complete the quiz (e.g. 5-7 minutes) and tell them to answer as many questions as they can in that time.
- Collect quizzes—they will be used again in Session 9.

“What Do Ya Know??”		
1. Ovaries produce eggs.	T	F
2. Men and women both have urethras.	T	F
3. Babies grow in a woman's vagina.	T	F
4. Women should begin to get Pap Smears three years after they become sexually active or at 21 years of age.	T	F
5. A Pap Smear checks for STDs.	T	F
6. Douching is a recommended way to maintain hygiene.	T	F
7. Some untreated STDs can scar the fallopian tubes and cause infertility.	T	F
8. The average age women begin to menstruate is 16.	T	F
9. Cervical cancer is associated with an STD.	T	F
10. Some birth defects and disabilities can be prevented.	T	F
11. Overweight and obese women are at increased risk for poor reproductive health and pregnancy complications.	T	F
12. Women who smoke are at an increased risk for reproductive health problems.	T	F
13. Sex during pregnancy isn't safe.	T	F
14. Drug and alcohol use can increase your chances of getting an STD or pregnant.	T	F
15. Women who are pregnant should not drink alcohol.	T	F
16. Oil-based lubricants should be used with condoms.	T	F
17. People who don't want to get pregnant should use protection against pregnancy and STDs every time they have sex.	T	F
18. Girls get sexual urges that are just as strong as those that boys get.	T	F
19. The average size of an erect penis is between 7 and 10 inches.	T	F
20. A penis reaches its full size at around age 16.	T	F

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3. Whatchamacallit¹

5-8 minutes, large group, adult or teen co-facilitator

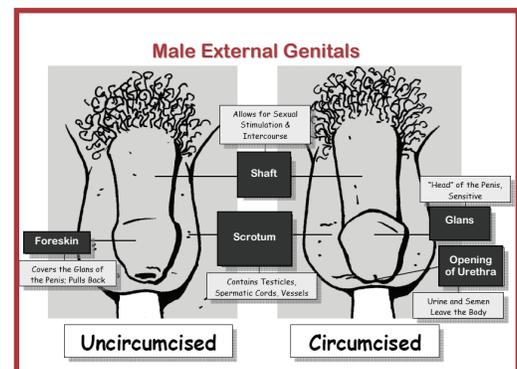
- Introduce activity by acknowledging that even though everybody has genitals, people often feel embarrassed or giggly talking about them.
- Ask the students to call out some commonly used (“street” or “slang”) names they may have heard for genital structures, including the penis, vagina, breasts, and testicles. (If the students are reluctant to say commonly used names aloud, you may need to start the list yourself.)
- As the students throw out terms, repeat them aloud to acknowledge their existence.
- Once the students start running out of terms, ask them to call out commonly used names for other body parts, like the elbow, foot, or ear.
- Ask the students why they think there are so many commonly used names for body parts related to sex, but none for nonsexual body parts. Point out that sex and reproduction are emotionally charged and often held secret in our society, and these are some reasons why there are so many commonly used, or “slang”, names.
- Let the students know that in Native STAND we will use the proper names for body parts so that everyone understands what we are talking about.



4. Learning the Parts^{2,3}

20-25 minutes, large group discussion, adult facilitator

- Refer students to the handouts of the Male and Female Reproductive Systems in the PM. Ask the students to follow along as you describe the different parts of the systems and their functions.
- On the diagram of the male external genitals:
 - ◇ Describe these components:
 - Shaft—allows for sexual stimulation and sex
 - Scrotum—contains testicles
 - Foreskin—covers the glans of the penis (if not circumcised)
 - Glans—“head” of the penis
 - Opening of urethra—urine and semen leave the body through this opening
 - ◇ Point out that some males are circumcised and some are uncircumcised. Circumcision is removal of the foreskin, and it is usually performed shortly after birth. Let the students know that males can be healthy and normal, whether or not they are circumcised. Mention also that most males have one testicle that hangs lower than the other.



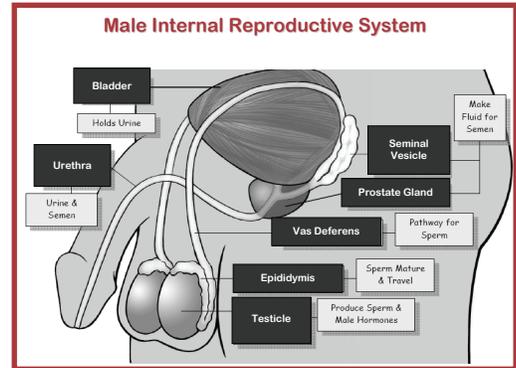
¹ Adapted from Big Decisions curriculum, available at: <http://www.bigdecisions.org>.

² Adapted from Guide to Implementing TAP (Teens for AIDS Prevention): A Peer Education Program to Prevent HIV/STD Infection. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth, © 2002.

³ Adapted from Big Decision curriculum, available at: <http://www.bigdecisions>.

- On the diagram of the male internal reproductive system:

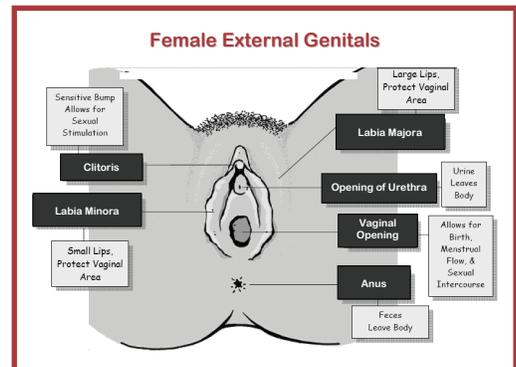
- ◇ Describe these components:
 - Bladder—holds urine
 - Urethra—urine and semen leave body through this pathway
 - Seminal Vesicles—makes fluid for semen
 - Prostate Gland—makes fluid for semen
 - Vas Deferens—pathway for sperm
 - Epididymis—sperm mature and travel through this organ
 - Testicles—produce sperm and male hormones



- ◇ Trace the path that sperm take from the testes, through the epididymis and vas deferens, over and behind the bladder, through the prostate gland, into the urethra, through the penis and out the tip of the penis with ejaculation.

- On the diagram of the female external genitals:

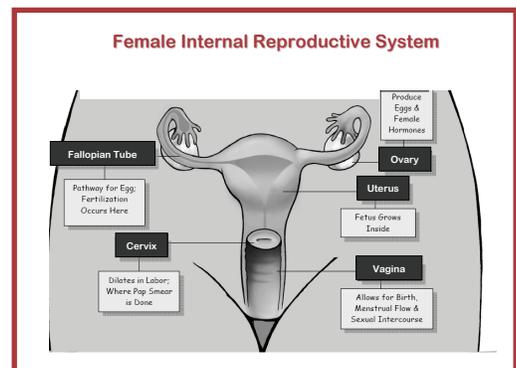
- ◇ Describe these components:
 - Clitoris—sensitive bump that allows for sexual stimulation
 - Labia Minora—small “lips”, protect vaginal area
 - Labia Majora—large “lips”, protect vaginal area
 - Opening of urethra—urine leaves body through this opening
 - Opening of vagina—allows for birth, menstrual flow, and sex
 - Anus—feces leaves body through this opening



- ◇ Point out the opening of the vagina, and let the class know that some females have a hymen, i.e., tissue around the opening. This is the tissue that is sometimes called a “cherry”. For many females, this tissue is stretched or broken when they first have vaginal sex, and they can have some bleeding or pain. Some females have very little hymeneal tissue, and have no bleeding or pain when they first have vaginal sex.

- On the diagram of the female internal reproductive system:

- ◇ Describe these components:
 - Fallopian Tube—pathway for egg, where fertilization occurs
 - Vagina—allows for birth, menstrual flow, sex
 - Uterus—fetus grows inside
 - Ovary—produce eggs and female hormones
 - Cervix—opening to uterus, dilates in labor, where a Pap Smear is done



- ◇ Trace the path that the egg takes from the ovary, through the Fallopian tube, into the uterus. Then, if it has not been fertilized (in the tube), the egg goes with the menstrual blood flow through the cervix, and through the vagina to the outside of the body. If the egg is fertilized, this happens shortly

after ovulation (when the egg is released from the ovary). Fertilization of the egg by the sperm occurs in the Fallopian tube. The fertilized egg takes about a week to travel to the uterus, and then it implants in the uterine lining to begin a pregnancy. If fertilization and implantation are successful, the female will usually not have menstrual bleeding. This “missed” or “late” menstrual period is one of the symptoms of early pregnancy.

• Lead a discussion:

◇ Do you think males generally feel more comfortable than females about their genitals? If so, why do you think this is? *(Possible answer might include):*

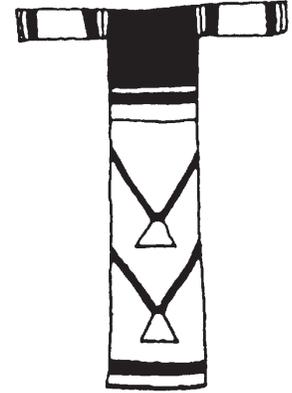
- Males can see their genitals and are taught to touch and handle their penis to urinate.
- Females cannot easily see their genitals and are often discouraged from touching them.

◇ Why is it important to feel comfortable touching your own genitals? *(Possible answer might include):*

- Genitals are sources of erotic pleasure and masturbation is a risk-free way of expressing and experiencing one’s sexuality. Males need to touch their testicles to feel for lumps that might be a sign of testicular cancer
- Women who use tampons must touch their genitals.
- For both sexes, some methods of contraception require touching the genitals.
- It’s always important for teens to know how their bodies function and how they can stay healthy

◇ Why is it important for teens to understand exactly how and when conception occurs? *(Possible answer might include):*

- Knowing exactly how and when conception occurs is necessary so that teens know how to prevent pregnancy, by abstaining from vaginal intercourse or by using effective contraception.



5. Big Changes: Stages of Adolescent Development

20-25 minutes, large group discussion, adult facilitator

- Ask for a volunteer to define the term “puberty”. (The response may be: When boys and girls experience physical changes as they move from childhood into adulthood.)
- Ask the group what specific physical changes occur during puberty. Write the answers on chart paper. (Answers may include: acne/breakouts, breasts grow, testicles and penis grow, body hair starts to grow, boys’ voices change, you start to sweat more, body odor starts, girls start their menstrual periods, sexual urges may begin, girls hips grow and their waists form.)
- Direct students to Big Changes: Stages in Adolescent Development⁴ in the PM. Read through the table on the next page and ask them to follow along.
- Emphasize that everyone experiences these changes differently and there is no right or wrong way to develop into an adult.

**Big Changes:
Stages of Adolescent Development**

Stage	Boys	Girls
1	No sexual development	No sexual development
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Testicles enlarge around age 9 ○ Body odor begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breasts begin growing may start as early as 8 yrs old ○ Body odor begins ○ Pubic hair starts to grow around age 9-10 ○ Growth spurt begins between ages 9-14, av. age 12
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Penis begins growing around age 12 ○ Wet dreams (“nocturnal emissions”) begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breasts keep growing ○ Pubic hair darkens ○ Vaginal discharge begins
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voice deepens begins around age 13 ○ Penis and testicles continue to grow ○ Penis and scrotum deepen in color ○ Pubic hair becomes curlier and coarser ○ Growth spurt begins around age 14 ○ Breast development begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Menstruation begins usually 2 years after puberty starts—can be as early as 9 or as late as 15—average age is 12.5
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Penis reaches full size around age 16-17 ○ Pubic hair extends to inner thighs ○ Height spurt tapers off ○ Height spurt tapers off ○ Fully mature male 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pubic hair extends to inner thighs ○ Height spurt tapers off ○ Breasts are fully developed between 15-16 yrs old ○ Fully mature female

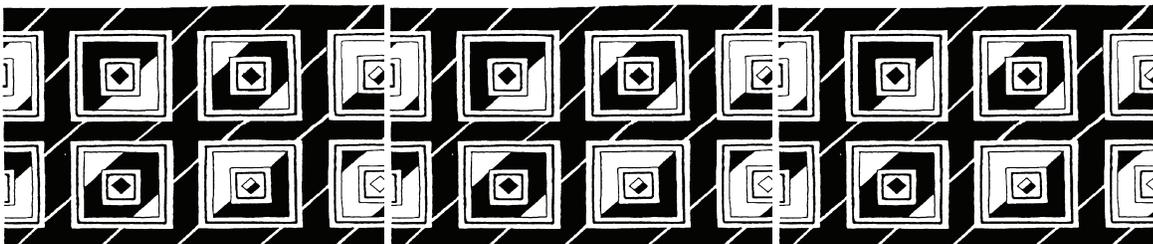


⁴Adapted from Puberty Information for Parents and Kids, <http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/puberty.htm>

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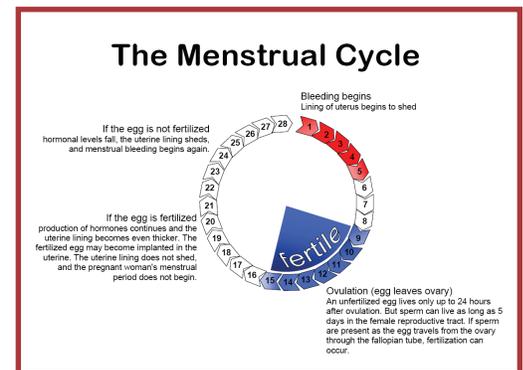


¹ Adapted from Puberty Information for Parents and Kids, <http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/puberty.htm>

6. “It’s That Time of the Month . . . Again!”

15-20 minutes, large group discussion, adult facilitator

- Explain that a woman’s menstrual cycle is a very basic human physical process, and that without it none of us would be here. A woman’s monthly cycle is what allows her to become pregnant (or not).
- Ask:
 - ◇ Why is it important for a woman to understand her menstrual cycle?
 - So she can know when her most fertile times of the month are to avoid or attempt a pregnancy
 - So she can know whether her cycles are regular or not
 - ◇ Is it important for men to understand how a woman’s menstrual cycle works? Why or why not?
 - Yes, because men are also responsible for avoiding an unplanned pregnancy
 - ◇ Why is it important for a woman to keep track of when her periods start?
 - So she can know when her cycle began and estimate her most fertile days so she can be extra careful to avoid pregnancy during that time.
- Refer students to The Menstrual Cycle⁵ in the PM. Have them follow along as you describe the menstrual cycle:
 - ◇ Most women have a menstrual cycle that last an average of 28 days.
 - ◇ The first day of her cycle is the day her period begins.
 - ◇ The blood that comes out is actually the lining of her uterus.
 - ◇ A woman’s uterus builds up the lining anticipating a fertilized egg. Since no fertilized egg happened, the body sheds the lining.
 - ◇ Half-way through her cycle, hormonal changes cause her ovary to release an egg.
 - ◇ An unfertilized egg only lives up to 24 hours after it is released from the ovary. (However, sperm cells can live as long as five days in the female reproductive tract. So if sperm are present as the egg travels from the ovary through the fallopian tube, fertilization can occur.)
 - ◇ In the meantime, hormonal changes cause the uterine lining to begin to build up again.
 - ◇ If the egg is fertilized, hormone levels continue to rise and the uterine lining becomes even thicker.
 - ◇ The fertilized egg may become implanted in the uterine. If so, the uterine lining does not shed, and the pregnant woman’s menstrual period does not begin. She is pregnant.
 - ◇ If fertilization does not occur, hormone levels fall, the uterine lining sheds, and menstrual bleeding begins again.
- Ask:
 - ◇ What happens the first day of a woman’s menstrual cycle?
 - ◇ Around how many days after her period does a woman’s fertile period begin? (Remind students that every woman is different and these are just approximations.)
 - ◇ Around how many days does a woman’s fertile time last?



⁵ Source: Family Health International, http://www.fhi.org/en/RH/Pubs/Network/v17_1/nt1712.htm

- ◇ Once a woman's fertile period has passed, is it safe to have sex without protection? Why or why not?

7. When a Woman Has Her Moon

5-7 minutes, large group discussion, adult facilitator

- Introduce topic by stating that in many cultures there are strong beliefs, customs, and practices about menstruating women. In some cultures, menstruating women are seen as having a lot of power, in others they may be seen as unclean. Because of these beliefs, in some cultures, women live in separate quarters while they menstruate, they may not be able to interact with other people, or they may not be able to prepare food.
- Refer students to *When a Woman Has Her Moon* in the PM.
- Read the passage to the students or have them read it silently to themselves.



When a Woman Has Her Moon

People will say that a woman who is having her moon should stay away from the ceremonies because she could ruin them, but they don't understand or know why this is. It is because a woman is the only one who can bring a child into this world. It is the most sacred and powerful of all mysteries. Certainly the man must be there to plant the seed, but his part is simple and relatively unimportant.

When a woman is having her time, her blood is flowing, and this blood is full of mysterious powers that are related to childbearing. At this time she is particularly powerful. To bring a child into this world is the most powerful thing in creation. A man's power is nothing compared to this, and he can do nothing compared to it. We respect that power.

If a woman should come into contact with the things that a man prays with (pipe, rattles, medicine objects) during this time it will drain all the male powers away from them. You see, a woman's power and a man's are opposites—not in a bad way, but in a good way. Because of the power a woman has during this time it is best that, out of respect for her men and for their medicine things, she stay away from them. In the past they would build a little lodge for her, and their other female relatives would serve her needs. She would get a rest from all of her chores. It was not a negative thing like people think now. So you see, we did this out of respect for this great mystery, out of respect for the special powers of women.

Joseph Rockaby
Yankton/Sioux Falls, Dakota



Source: Fitzgerald J & Fitzgerald MD (eds) The Spirit of Indian Women: World Wisdom, Inc., 2005

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- Ask: What are your community's beliefs about menstruating women? Are there particular stories your tribe tells about them?



8. The Truth About Feminine Hygiene

5-7 minutes, large group discussion, adult facilitator

- Explain that many people—especially teens whose bodies are changing so quickly—worry about sweat and smells coming from their underarms. Girls and women sometimes worry about vaginal odors.
- Showering and bathing on a regular basis, using mild soap and warm water, should be effective in keeping underarms and genital areas clean as well. Deodorants are a good idea for underarm areas for males and females.
- Many products like douches, feminine sprays, deodorants, or wipes are marketed to supposedly keep a woman's vaginal area smelling “fresh and clean”. Douching (the name comes from the French word “to wash”) refers to washing out the vagina, usually with a prepackaged mix of fluids. Unless a doctor tells you to, you never need to douche. Douching can cause allergic reactions, irritation, and even infections in the vagina.
- Feminine sprays and deodorants aren't a good idea either. They are often heavily perfumed and—like douching—can lead to allergic reactions, irritation, and infections. The vagina has its own natural cleaning system that flushes out bacteria, so you don't need to add any chemicals to help it.
- For more information, refer students to Douching FAQs in the PM.

Douching FAQs

- Q: What is douching?**
A: The word “douches” means to soak or wash in French. Douching is washing or cleaning out the vagina with water or other mixtures of fluids. Usually douches are pre-packaged mixes of water and vinegar, baking soda, or iodine. Women can buy these products at drug and grocery stores. The mixtures usually come in a bottle and can be squirted into the vagina through a tube or nozzle.
- Q: Why do women douche?**
A: Women douche because they mistakenly believe it gives many benefits. In reality, douching may do more harm than good. Common reasons women give for using douches include:
- To clean the vagina
 - To rinse away blood after monthly menstruation
 - To get rid of odors from the vagina
 - To avoid STDs
 - To prevent pregnancy
- Q: How common is douching?**
A: Douching is common among women in the U.S. It is estimated that 20-40% of American women aged 15 to 44 douche regularly. About half these women douche every week.
- Q: Is douching safer?**
A: Most doctors and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) suggest that women do not douche. All healthy vaginas contain some bacteria and other organisms called the vaginal flora. The normal acidity of the vagina keeps the amount of bacteria down. But douching can change this delicate balance. This may make a woman more prone to vaginal infections. Plus, douching can spread existing vaginal infections up into the uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries.
- Q: What are the dangers linked to douching?**
A: Research shows that women who douche regularly have more health problems than women who do not. Health problems linked to douching include:
- Vaginal irritation
 - Vaginal infections (called bacterial vaginosis or BV)
 - STDs
 - Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
- PID is an infection of a woman's uterus, fallopian tubes and/or ovaries. It is caused by bacteria that travel from a woman's vagina and cervix up into her reproductive organs. If untreated, PID can cause fertility problems (difficulties getting pregnant). PID also increases a woman's chances of an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy that occurs in the fallopian tube instead of the uterus).

9. I Didn't Know That!—Male Reproductive Issues

10-12 minutes, individual, large group, adult facilitator

- Refer students to “I Didn't Know That! - Male Reproductive Health Issues” the PM.
- Ask them to read the handout individually.
- Ask volunteers to share one piece of information that they did not know before reading the handout.

10. Closing

3-5 minutes, large group lecture, adult co-facilitator

- Answer any questions.
- Preview next session: Reproductive Health—Part 2
- Direct the students' attention to the WOW. Ask a volunteer to read the words and to share with the group what those words mean to him or her and how they relate to today's session and activities.
- Adjourn.

“I Didn't Know That!”: Male Reproductive Health Issues

- Does size really matter?**
Many boys worry about the size and shape of their penis. Is it too small? Too big? Too thin? Does it hang straight? Or does it curve slightly to one side? Yet penises come in all shapes and sizes and all are very different. The average length of a penis when it is flaccid (not erect) is around 3 to 4 inches whereas when it is hard it is around 5 to 7 inches. However, your penis size can depend on many things like the weather, your body shape, pubic hair and even ethnicity. Your penis also doesn't stop growing until you reach the ages of 18 to 21, so don't fret yet if you feel yours is too small.
- What is a penis?**
The penis is made up of a shaft, the glans (head/helmet) and the prepuce (foreskin). You pee through the urethra, which is a tube that passes through the penis and carries both urine from the bladder and semen from the testicles. If you have been circumcised then you won't have a foreskin. This is surgically removed at a young age for cultural and religious reasons.
- Foreskin**
When a boy is born he has an uncircumcised penis. This means his penis has a foreskin that covers the head (glans) of the penis. In the U.S., many parents choose to have the foreskin removed within a few days of the baby's birth, which is called circumcision. Other parents leave the foreskin intact. Whether or not a child is circumcised is a matter of the parents' personal preference and beliefs, and sometimes is because of religious or cultural practices.
- If a man is uncircumcised, the foreskin should be gently pulled back to expose the tip of the penis, which should then be washed with mild soap and water. Washing the penis daily this way is important because during puberty and beyond, dead skin cells and an oil-like substance called smegma can accumulate under the foreskin forming a substance called “smegma”. Smegma can build up and cause infections or harden if not washed away on a regular basis. A man with a circumcised penis should also wash his penis with mild soap and water daily.
- Erections**
Most boys start to experience erections when they reach puberty. They happen when you get sexually aroused and extra blood flows to the penis. This causes the penis to swell and grow large and hard. Sometimes erections are referred to as a hard-on or a boner, although there aren't actually any bones in the penis!

NOTES



