

8: Reproductive Health - Part 1

Words of Wisdom

What Do Ya Know? Quiz

Male & Female Reproductive Systems

Big Changes

The Menstrual Cycle

When a Woman Has Her Moon

Douching FAQs

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

Answers to What Do Ya Know? Quiz Answers

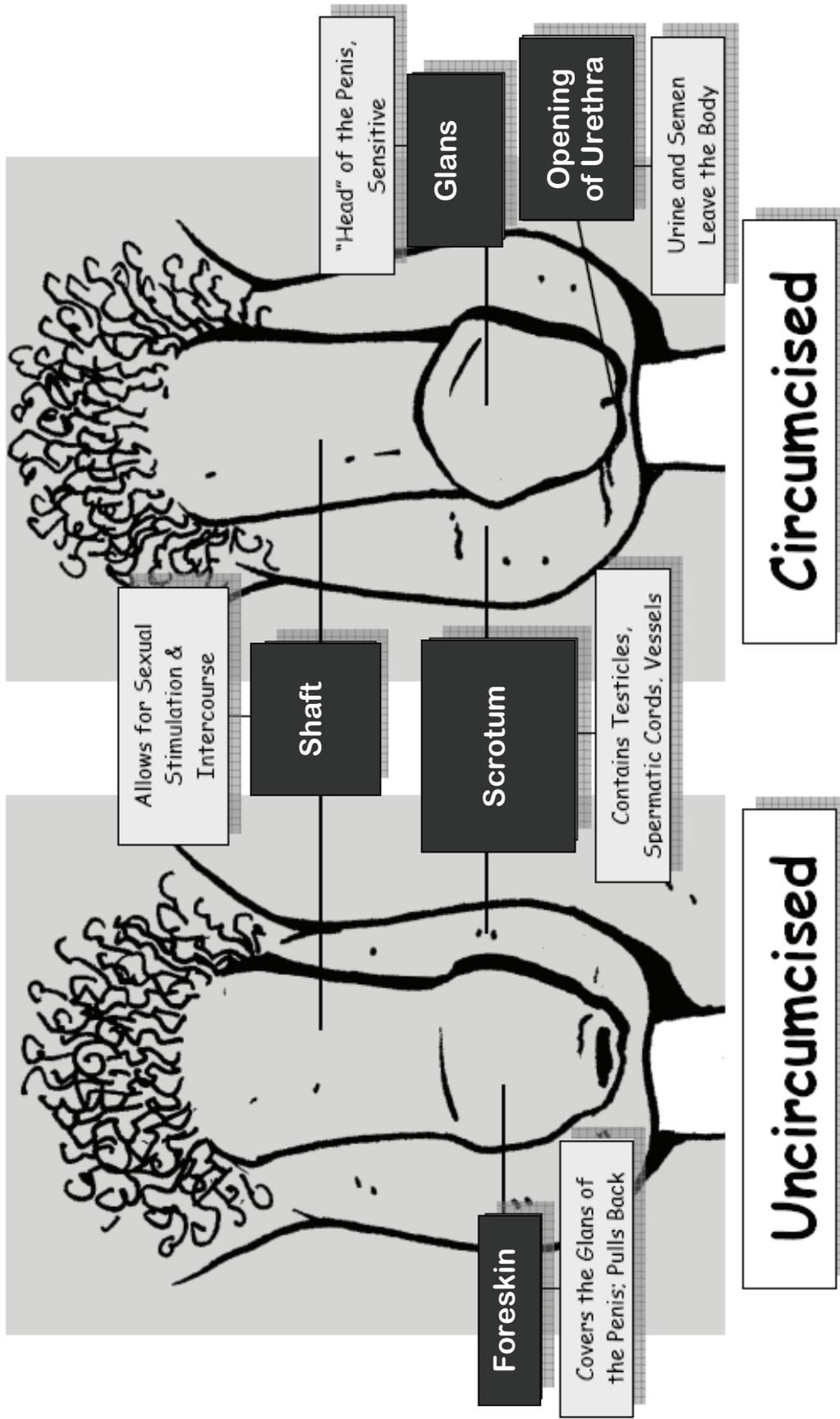
**There are many paths
to a meaningful sense
of the natural world.**

Blackfoot

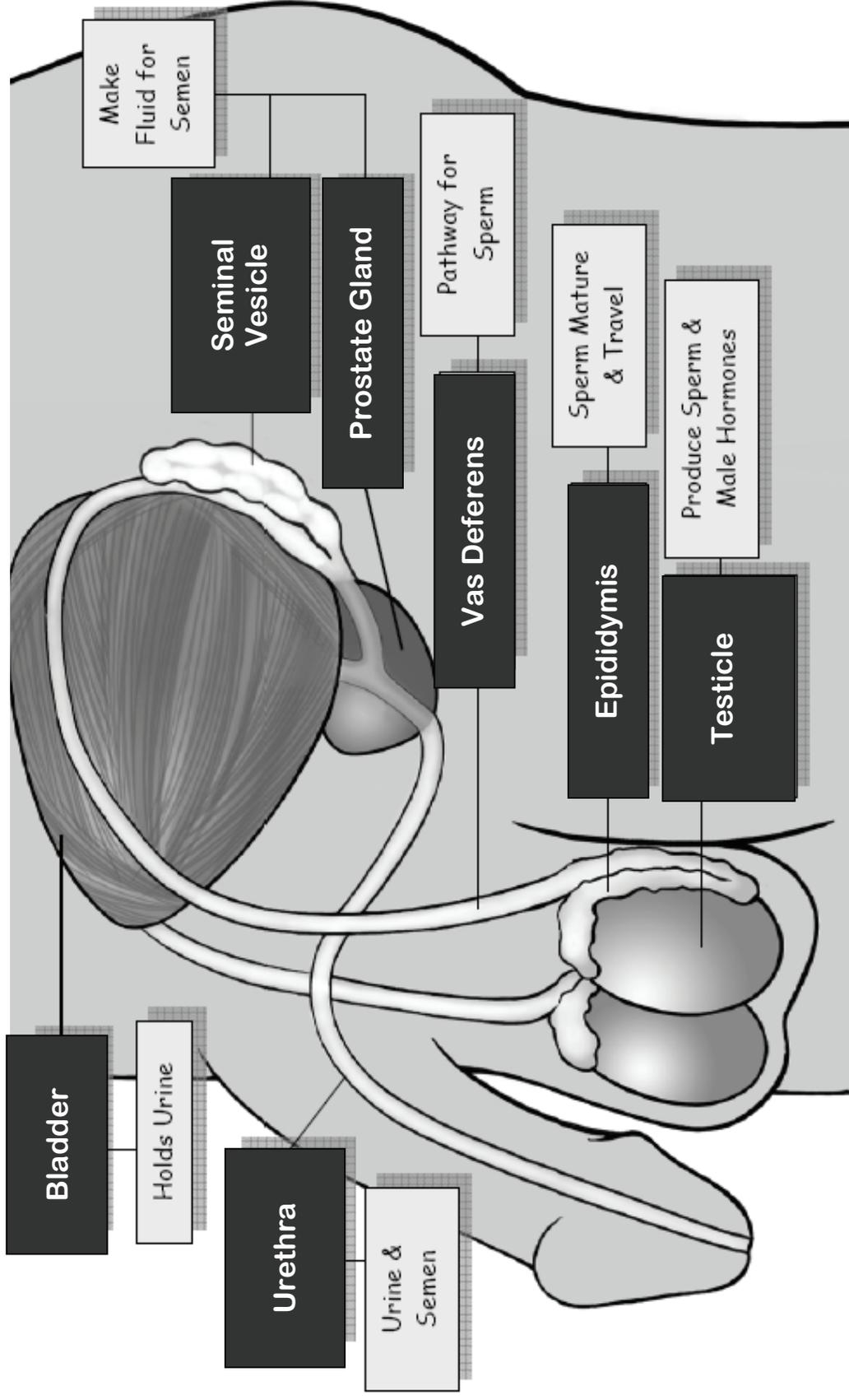
“What Do Ya Know??”

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 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 |

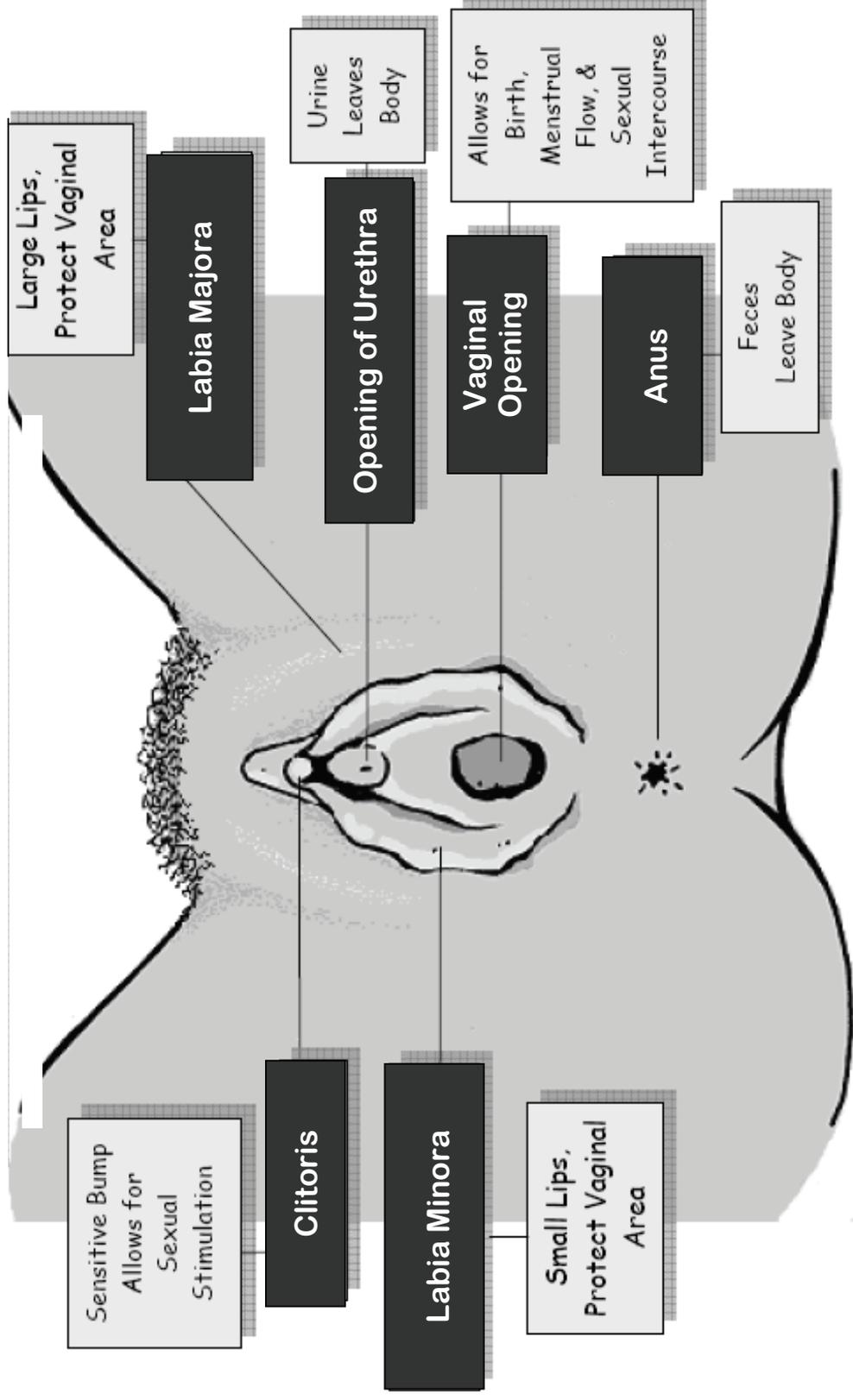
Male External Genitals



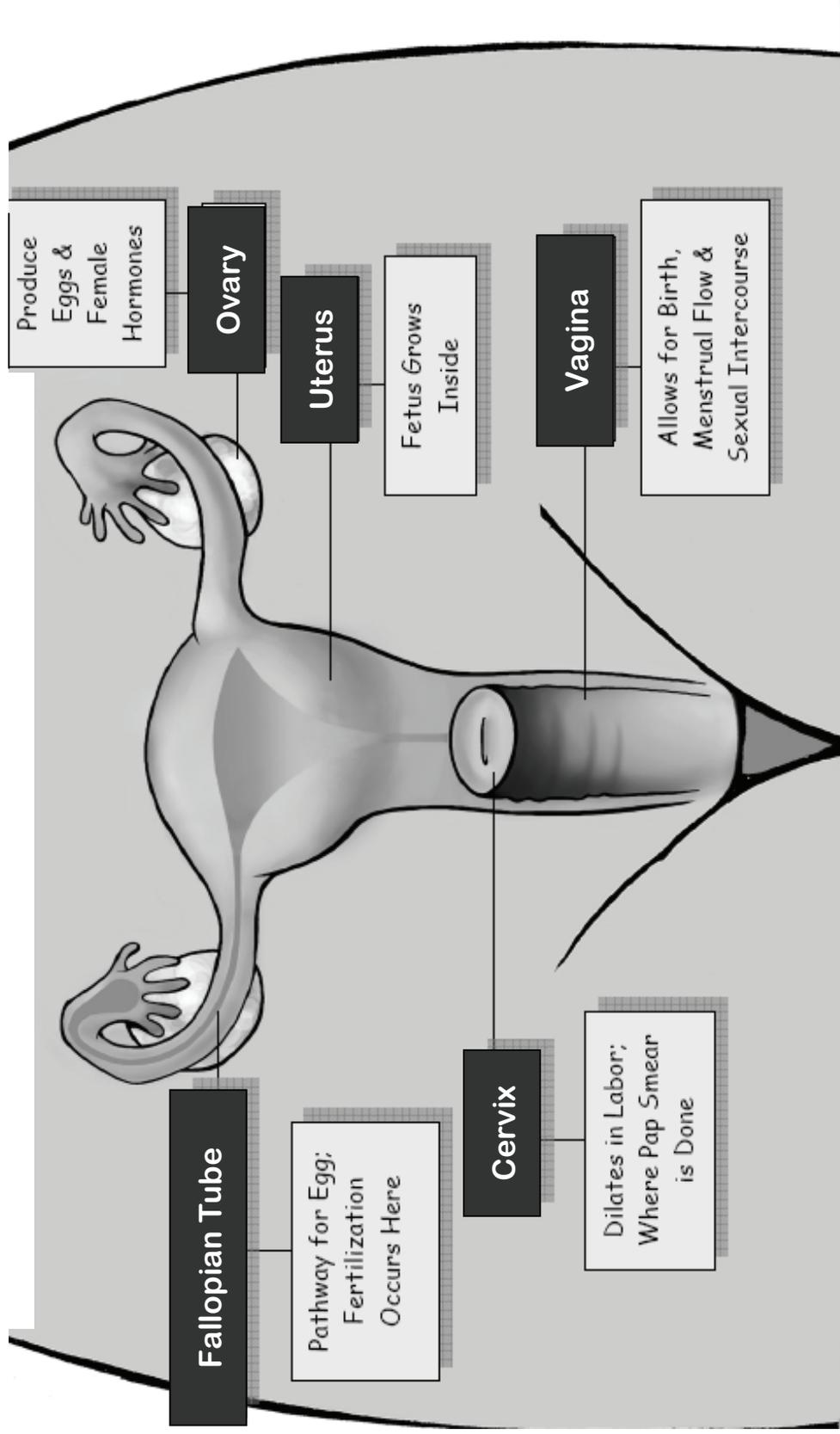
Male Internal Reproductive System



Female External Genitals

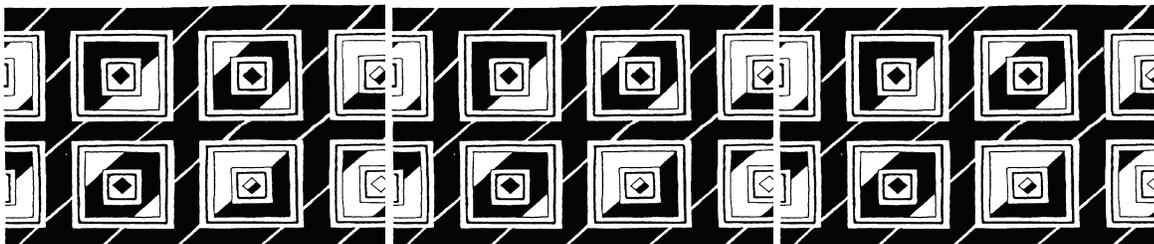


Female Internal Reproductive System



Big Changes: Stages of Adolescent Development¹

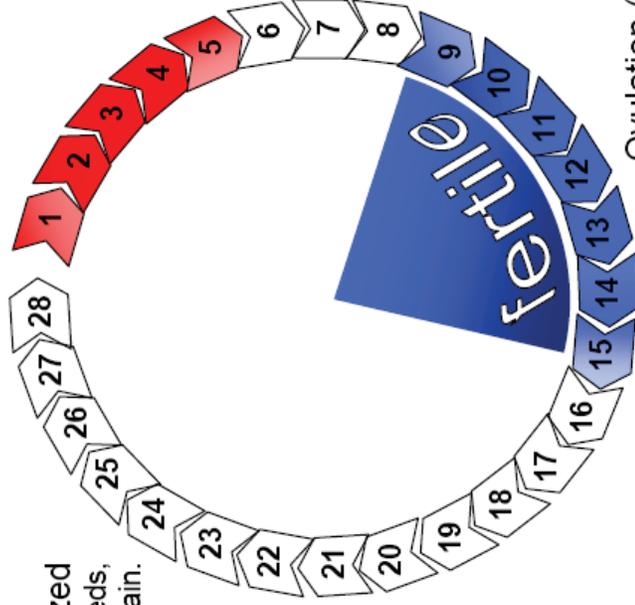
Stage	Boys	Girls
1	No sexual development	No sexual development
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Testicles enlarge <i>around age 9</i> ○ Body odor begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breasts begin growing, <i>may start as early as 8 yrs old</i> ○ Body odor begins ○ Pubic hair starts to grow <i>around age 9-10</i> ○ Growth spurt begins <i>between ages 9-14, average age 12</i>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Penis begins growing ○ Pubic hair starts growing <i>around age 12</i> ○ 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 <i>beginning around age 13</i> ○ Penis and testicles continue to grow ○ Penis and scrotum deepen in color ○ Pubic hair becomes curlier and coarser ○ Growth spurt begins <i>around age 14</i> ○ Breast development begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Menstruation begins <i>usually 2 years after puberty starts—can be as early as 9 or as late as 15—average age is 12.5</i>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Penis reaches full size <i>around age 16-17</i> ○ Pubic hair extends to inner thighs <i>around age 16</i> ○ Height spurt tapers off ○ Fully mature male 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pubic hair extends to inner thighs <i>around age 14</i> ○ Height spurt tapers off ○ Breasts are fully developed <i>between 12-18 yrs old</i> ○ Fully mature female



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

The Menstrual Cycle

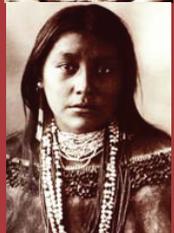
Bleeding begins
Lining of uterus begins to shed



If the egg is not fertilized hormonal levels fall, the uterine lining sheds, and menstrual bleeding begins again.

If the egg is fertilized production of hormones continues and the uterine lining becomes even thicker. The fertilized egg may become implanted in the uterine. The uterine lining does not shed, and the pregnant woman's menstrual period does not begin.

Ovulation (egg leaves ovary)
An unfertilized egg lives only up to 24 hours after ovulation. But sperm can live as long as 5 days in the female reproductive tract. If sperm are present as the egg travels from the ovary through the fallopian tube, fertilization can occur.



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 on 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 Rockboy
Yankton/Sicangu Dakota*



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

Douching FAQs

Q: What is douching?

A: The word “douche” 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 safe?

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 left 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).

Q: Should I douche to clean the inside of my vagina?

A: No. Doctors and ACOG suggest women avoid douching completely. Most experts believe that douching increases a woman's chance of an infection. The only time a woman should douche is when and if her doctor recommends it.

Q: What is the best way to clean my vagina?

A: Most doctors say that it is best to let your vagina clean itself. The vagina cleans itself naturally by producing mucous (discharge). Women do not need to douche away blood, semen, or vaginal discharge. The vagina gets rid of it alone. Also, it's important to note that even healthy, clean vaginas may have a mild odor. This is natural and normal.

Regular washing with warm water and mild soap during baths and showers will keep the outside of the vagina clean and healthy. Doctors suggest women avoid scented tampons, pads, sprays, and powders. These products may increase a woman's chances of getting vaginal infections.

Q: My vagina has a terrible odor, can douching help?

A: No. Douching will only cover up the smell, it will not make it go away. If your vagina has a bad odor, you should see a doctor right away. It could be a sign of a bacterial infection, urinary tract infection, STD, or a more serious problem.

Q: Should I douche to get rid of vaginal discharge, pain, itching, or burning?

A: No. Douching may even make these problems worse. It is very important to see a doctor right away if you have:

- Vaginal discharge with a bad smell
- Thick, white or yellow-green discharge with or without a smell
- Burning, redness, and swelling of the vagina or the area around it
- Pain when urinating
- Pain or discomfort during sex

These may be signs of a bacterial infection, yeast infection, urinary tract infection, or STD. Do not douche before seeing a doctor. This can make it hard for the doctor to figure out what is wrong.

Q: Can douching after sex prevent STDs?

A: No. This is a myth. The only way to completely prevent STDs is not to have sex. But practicing safer sex will dramatically decrease your risk of getting an STD. You can greatly reduce your chances of getting an STD in the following ways:

- Using latex condoms or female condoms every time you have sex
- Preventing the exchange of semen, vaginal excretions, and blood.

“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 of 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 sebum 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!

Wet Dreams

If you've woken up in the morning to find your bed sheets are wet then chances are you've experienced a wet dream. This is where you become sexually aroused and ejaculate (come) in your sleep. Lots of boys have wet dreams during their teens although they become less frequent as you become older and your hormones level out.

"Blue Balls"

You may have heard the term "blue balls". This is used to describe an uncomfortable feeling in the testicles. This can happen if you get an erection but don't actually ejaculate. The feeling doesn't last long but it can cause discomfort.

Lump and Bumps

Most men will have a few bumps on their penis. Common bumps include sebaceous glands on the surface of the skin. You'll find them on the shaft and they are totally natural. They are usually yellow in color and secrete an oily substance called sebum. Other bumps include pearly papules. These are small hard white bumps on the head of the penis. Your penis can also get the occasional spot and pimple which may cause some discomfort. Some people mistake them for genital warts, but again they are harmless and require no treatment as long as you don't squeeze or pop them. If you aren't sure whether a bump or lump is normal or not, it's always best to get it checked out by a health care provider. If you are sexually active, bumps or lumps could indicate that you have an STD, like herpes or genital warts. If you have any concerns about STDs contact your local health care provider immediately just to be on the safe side.

“What Do Ya Know??” Answers

1. Ovaries produce eggs.

T F

Every month during ovulation, an ovary produces a single mature egg for fertilization.²

2. Men and women both have urethras.

T F

The urethra is the canal that in most mammals carries off the urine from the bladder and in males also serves as a passageway for semen.³

3. Babies grow in a woman’s vagina.

T F

Babies grow in a woman’s uterus. The vagina is the canal leads from the uterus to the external opening.⁴

4. Women should begin to get Pap Smears three years after they become sexually active or at 21 years of age.

T F

This is the recommendation of the American College of Obstetrics & Gynecology (ACOG).⁵

5. A Pap Smear checks for STDs.

T F

A Pap smear is a test for the early detection of cervical cancer. STD screening may be conducted at the same time as a Pap smear, but this is not always done.⁶

6. Douching is a recommended way to maintain hygiene.

T F

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.⁷

7. Some untreated STDs can scar the fallopian tubes and cause infertility.

T F

Many STDs stay in your body if they are not treated. They can spread into the uterus or fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a serious infection of the reproductive organs. PID can cause damage that makes you unable to get pregnant.⁸

² <http://womenshealth.about.com/cs/ovarianconditions/a/rovrisovuvovads.htm>

³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/urethras>

⁴ <http://medical.merriam-webster.com/cgi-bin/medical>

⁵ http://www.acog.org/from_home/publications/press_releases/nr05-09-06-2.cfm

⁶ <http://medical.merriam-webster.com/medical/pap%20smear>

⁷ <http://www.4woman.gov/faq/douching.htm#D>

⁸ <http://www.cdc.gov/std/chlamydia/the-facts/default.htm>

8. The average age women begin to menstruate is 16. T F

In the U.S., the average age is 12. Girls can start their periods anytime between the 8 and 15. If a girl has not had her first period by 15, she should see a doctor.⁹

9. Cervical cancer is associated with an STD. T F

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common STD. Certain types of HPV cause cervical cancers.¹⁰

10. Some birth defects and disabilities can be prevented. T F

Although scientists do not know the cause of most birth defects, they do know how to prevent some birth defects. Preconception consumption of folic acid, abstinence from alcohol, STD prevention, and controlled diabetes are a few known interventions to prevent birth defects.¹¹

11. Overweight and obese women are at increased risk for poor reproductive health and pregnancy complications. T F

Obesity in women can cause serious pregnancy-related complications, including infertility, labor and delivery complications, fetal and neonatal death, maternal complications (e.g. hypertension, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia), and delivery of large-for-gestational-age infants.¹²

12. Women who smoke are at an increased risk for reproductive health problems. T F

Smoking during pregnancy can harm the health of both a woman and her unborn baby. In the infant, maternal smoking can cause preterm delivery, low birthweight, cerebral palsy, congenital heart defects. In the mother, maternal smoking can cause serious problems with the placenta.¹³

13. Sex during pregnancy isn't safe. T F

Unless a health care provider advises someone otherwise, sex during pregnancy is safe for the mother and the baby. The baby is protected by the amniotic fluid in the womb and by the mother's abdomen.¹⁴

14. Drug and alcohol use can increase your chances of getting an STD or pregnant. T F

People who abuse alcohol and illicit drugs may be at higher risk for contracting a STD or having an unplanned pregnancy.¹⁵

⁹ <http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/menstru.htm#>

¹⁰ <http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/bd/prevention.htm>

¹² http://www.marchofdimes.com/files/MP_MaternalObesity040605.pdf

¹³ http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1171.asp

¹⁴ http://www.marchofdimes.com/printableArticles/159_516.asp

¹⁵ <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k7/STD/STD.pdf>

15. Women who are pregnant should not drink alcohol.

T F

Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause physical and mental birth defects. Each year, up to 40,000 babies are born with some degree of alcohol-related damage.¹⁶

16. Oil-based lubricants should be used with condoms.

T F

Do not use products made with oil as lubricants for latex condoms. They can damage latex. Materials that should **not** be used include: any oils (cooking, baby, coconut, mineral), petroleum jelly, lotions, cold creams, butter, cocoa butter, and margarine. Instead, use water-based lubricants especially formulated for use during sex (such as K-Y or other lubricants made with glycerin or silicone).¹⁷

17. People who don't want to get pregnant should use protection against pregnancy and STDs every time they have sex.

T F

Condoms are a barrier method of contraception that, when used consistently and correctly, can prevent pregnancy by blocking the passage of semen into the vaginal canal. Condoms can also prevent the exchange of blood, semen, and vaginal secretions, which are the primary routes of most STD transmission.¹⁸

18. Girls get sexual urges that are just as strong as those that boys get.

T F

Both girls and boys have sexual urges from the time they are infants and it is normal for children of both sexes to experiment with and explore those urges.¹⁹

19. The average size of an erect penis is between 7 and 10 inches.

T F

The average length of an erect, adult penis is between 5 and 7 inches. Because teen boys' bodies are going through puberty, there is no accurate average size for younger guys.²⁰

20. A penis reaches its full size at around age 16.

T F

Most guys reach their full adult penis size by the time they get into their early 20s.²¹

¹⁶ http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1170.asp

¹⁷ <http://www.ippf.org/en/Resources/Guides-toolkits/Explaining+how+to+use+condoms.htm>

¹⁸ <http://www.sexedlibrary.org/condoms.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/us.php#hetero>

²⁰ http://www.sexetc.org/faq/guys_health/931

²¹ http://www.sexetc.org/faq/guys_health/931