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PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 2011

Reprinted by:
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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: GROWING PAINS

Your child is growing up fast!

Look at a photo of your child from at least a year ago. Because we see our children every day, we may miss some of their growth. All of those changes can lead to your child being the tallest in her class if she hit the growth spurt first, or the shortest if she is one of the last to hit a growth spurt.

It is important to remind your child that everyone is different and that each person will grow a little

differently. He may not look like everyone else in his class right now, but that is OK. Your child may need a little encouragement when it seems like he or she is different from everyone else.

When you look at your child, you may see yourself reflected in his hair, eyes or even the shape of his mouth or nose. The genes, the code that determines how each of us looks, is passed down from the parents and will largely determine how your child will look and grow.



Although genes have a lot of control over how your child will grow and develop, his body can be influenced by other things such as:

- how much food he eats
- what type of food he eats
- how much sleep he gets at night
- how much exercise he gets

As the parent, you can influence many of these behaviors! Make sure you help your child eat nutritious foods and get plenty of sleep and exercise.

Continued on the back

It is normal for a child to feel a little pain during a growth spurt.

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These things will help your child reach her full growth potential.

Growth Spurts

You should not worry if your child grows a lot, in a very short amount of time. It usually occurs during puberty for both girls and boys. Girls may start puberty a little sooner than boys.

- Girls usually have a growth spurt between 7 and 13 years of age
- Boys usually have a growth spurt between 9 and 15 years of age

It is important to remind your child that everyone is different and that each person will grow a little differently.

Growing pains are real aches and pains

Sometimes when your child is going through a growth spurt he or she may feel a little pain. Growing pains usually:

- Happen between ages 3–5 and 8–12
- Happen at night and go away by morning
- Are felt in the muscles

What can you do to help your child feel better?

- Tell your child to stretch like he or she does in physical education class
- Put a heating pad on your child's legs. The pain should be gone by the morning

Should you take your child to the doctor?

You should go to the doctor if your child:

- Has a fever with the pain
- Limp when he or she walks
- Has legs that look red
- Has legs that are swollen

If your child complains that the pain continues during the day, for long periods of time: talk to your healthcare provider about it!

If you are worried about how your child's body is changing, please talk to your healthcare provider.



REFERENCES:

- Kids Health. "What a pain! Kids and Growing Pains" The Nemours Foundation. August 2009. www.kidshealth.org/kid
- Kids Health. "I'm growing up – but am I normal?" The Nemours Foundation. May 2008. www.kidshealth.org/kid

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