

Session 4 of 4

A Webinar Series : Focus on Autistic Girls and Teens

# For Girls and Teens: Puberty and Menstruation

Presented by: Stephanie Moeser M.S.W, R.S.W



**Autism**ONTARIO

# We are going to talk about puberty

Let's talk... **getting** older....

Getting older means your body has started or will start changing

This can be confusing...remember you aren't the only one going through this. Everyone does.

It's okay to be confused and it's okay to ask questions, even if you feel embarrassed. The more you ask **questions**, the easier it gets.



# Menstruation. Periods. Why do we bleed?

About once a month you will **get a** period. This means that you will have vaginal bleeding about every 4 weeks.

Why do we get periods?

As a person with a uterus and vagina gets **older**, their body changes to enable their body to grow a baby inside their uterus. When there is no fetus developing inside the uterus, the uterine wall comes off and bleeds a little. The blood comes out the vagina. The body creates a new uterine wall each month.



# Periods... what to expect?

What to expect with periods?

Well, not everyone gets them at the exact same age.

Usually, a person with a uterus and vagina **gets** their first period between the ages of 11-15 years old.

People usually get their first period a year or two after their breasts begin to develop.



# How often and how long?

How often will I get my period?

- Sometimes it's a little bit shorter than 4 weeks and sometimes it's a little bit longer.

How long does it last?

- Each time you get your period, it will last usually somewhere between 3-7 days.



# The nitty gritty details

## How much will I bleed?

- It may seem like a lot but each period you will bleed a few tablespoons of blood.

## What to use for the bleeding?

- People usually **use pads**, or period underwear, or tampons or menstrual cups. People usually begin using pads or period underwear. They may feel **strange**, so some people like to try different types to see what is most comfortable.



# What else to expect?

Is there anything else to expect with periods?

- Sometimes your stomach may hurt a bit, often called 'cramps'. Sometimes people take medicine if it hurts a lot and sometimes people find warm baths or hot water bottles help.
- Sometimes people can feel a bit more moody or sad than usual before their periods. Some people on the spectrum may be more likely to experience meltdowns or less tolerance to sensory inputs before their periods.



# Tank tops, bras, sports bras.....

When young people begin to develop breasts, people often decide to wear something under their shirts or dresses during the day.

Often people choose to wear either tank tops, bras or sports bras. Some people find this comfortable, and some people find this a little uncomfortable. It may take you time to find what is most comfortable for you and it may take some time get used to this. That's okay.

All these changes may take a bit of time to get used to. **Thankfully,** these changes happen over time and not all at once.



# Taking care of yourself

It's always important to shower and bathe. As you move into **puberty**, it's just as important.

Due to sweat **glands**, many people begin to develop body odour when they move into their teenage years. Often people put deodorant on under their arms because this can help with sweating and the odour.

Showering regularly with soap and water can also help. It can sometimes be hard to remember to shower and what to do in the shower. It can help to write down the steps or have someone help you write down the steps. Try to shower at least every 2-3 days. A lot of people try to shower every day.



# Thanks!

Thanks so much for taking the time to listen and to learn!

