

# Puberty

Puberty was a godsend for me growing up. One of the defining symptoms of my disability is my voice - or as was prior to puberty, my distinct lack of voice. You see, before my balls dropped and everything started to get a whole lot hairier, I had a painfully quiet whispery voice that everyone struggled to understand. Still to this day my voice is a little on the quiet side, but now thankfully has a bit more diction and tone to it - although it regrettably went a little too far in the opposite direction and I now have a voice that even Barry White would be proud of. Cheers puberty!

I found being a disabled adolescent male to be quite difficult at times, especially when all my friends around me were being sexually explorative, yet at the same time it wasn't terribly cool to be the girl who got with 'the guy in the wheelchair', but that doesn't mean it didn't happen... ;)

**Anthony William, @geordie\_travels**

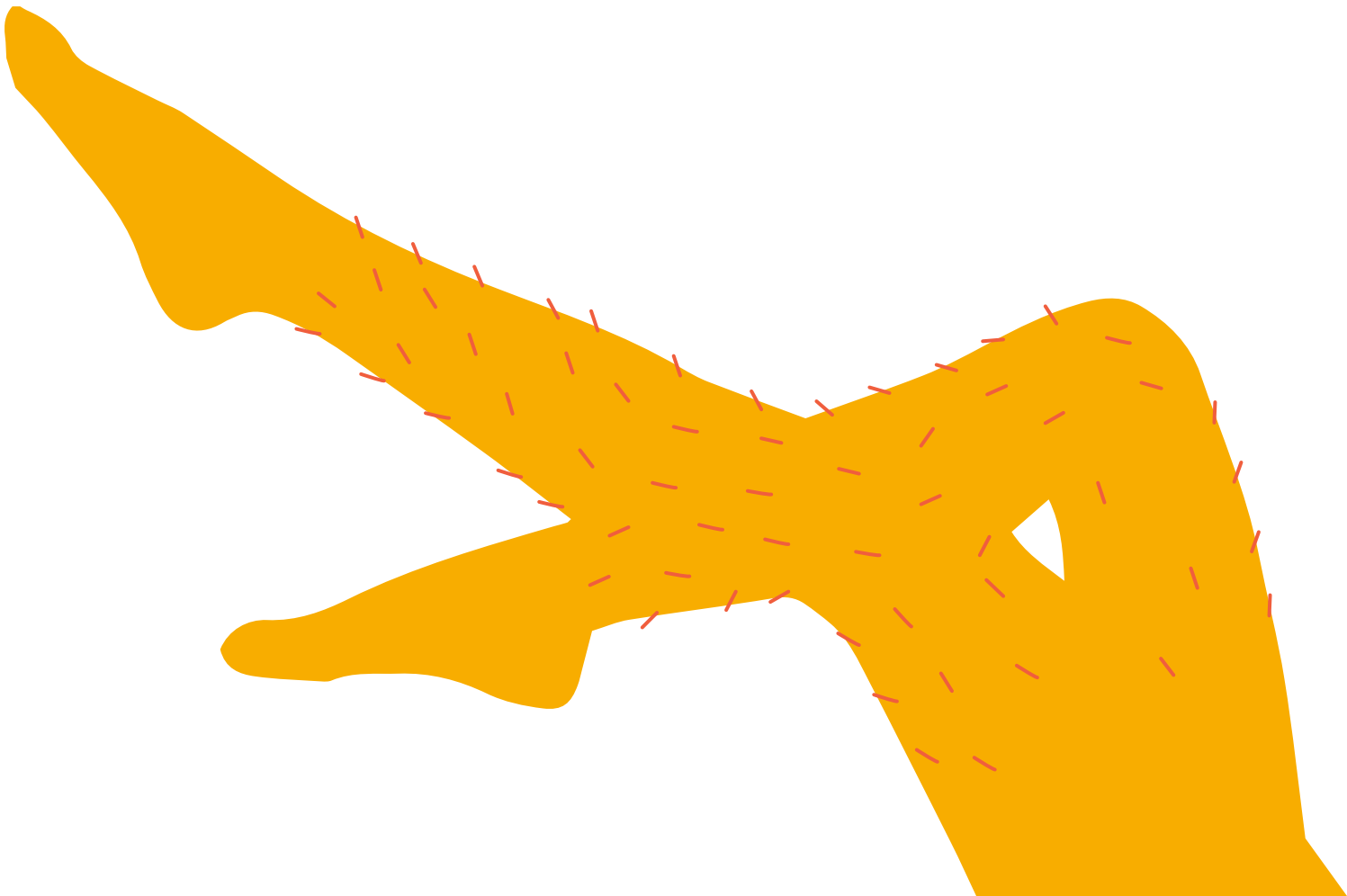


## Changes are coming...

Puberty can be exciting, scary and simply downright weird... But it's going to happen and there's very little you can do to stop it! Puberty can start from the age of 9, and can go on till you're 18 years old, usually starting earlier in girls and later in boys. Both genders will notice themselves:

- Getting taller
- Getting hairier (especially under the arms and between the legs)
- Getting sweatier (in the same places)
- Possibly getting spotty (sorry!)

There are, of course, somethings about puberty that differ in boys and girls...

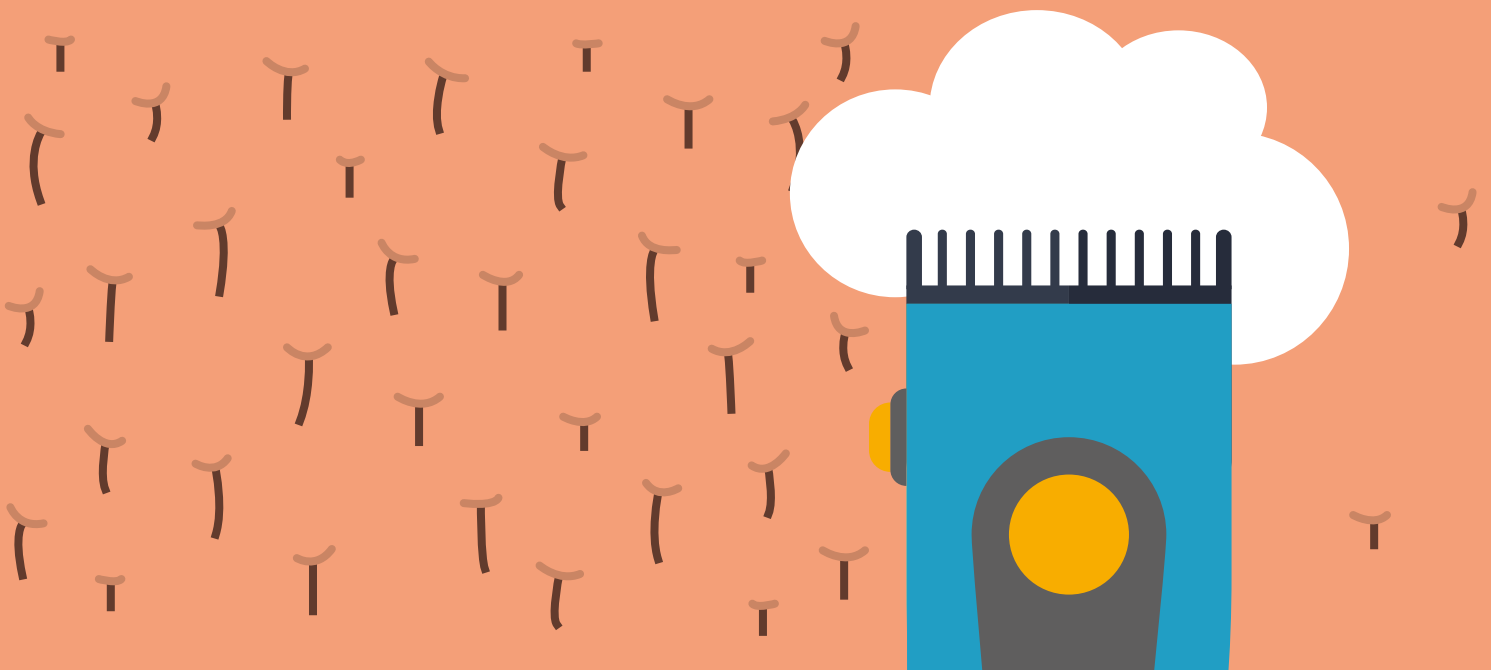


## For the ladies:

- Your chest will start to grow and fill out, your boobs will get bigger and your nipples might be sensitive.
- Your body is likely to curve and soften in places, and your hips will broaden (preparing you for motherhood!)
- Your periods will start. This could be anytime from 9 to 17 years old. Some girls don't get periods at all, but please discuss this with your GP for professional medical information.

## And for the fellas:

- Your voice will get deeper
- Muscles will develop and you will get a broader chest
- Your genitals will grow and you might get the odd unexpected erection (normal but potentially embarrassing, sorry!)
- You'll also get hair on your face, and might choose to get the razor out.



**If you have a disability:** Puberty can be tough if your impairment is affected by growth. For example, if you have cerebral palsy, you may need to have some extra physio to prevent your muscles getting any tighter as you grow. For girls with disabilities, see our guide on Menstruation for tips on how to deal with your periods.

## Extra support

Feel free to contact Mik or Emily at The Love Lounge:

[www.enhancetheuk.org/enhance/the-love-lounge](http://www.enhancetheuk.org/enhance/the-love-lounge)

These guides are part of Enhance the UK's **#UndressingDisability** campaign: Sex Ed for Teenagers. Show your support by following vaw

