Student frequently asked questions

Below are some sample responses that may be of some assistance to teachers. These are not the only answers and are provided only as a guide. Teachers should make decisions regarding the age appropriate language used with students based on the concepts, level of maturity and needs of students.

Questions

- Where do babies come from?
- How does the baby come out? What is birth?
- How are sperm made?
- How are twins made?
- How are babies made?
- What is sex?
- What is ovulation? What is menstruation? What does it mean when a girl has her period?
- How big does a penis get?
- What is a stiffy?
- What is a wet dream?
- Can girls have wet dreams?
- What does it mean if someone is gay?
- Am I the only one having strange thoughts and feelings?
- What is a lesbian?
- Can a girl get pregnant straight after her period?
- Can a hymen be

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Where do babies come from?</th>
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<td>The human body makes or produces many cells. There are certain types of cells that work together to make a baby. Male bodies produce cells called sperm and female bodies produce cells called eggs or ova. When a sperm (a cell shaped like a tiny tadpole) joins with an ova it can sometimes start to develop into a baby. The baby can only develop and grow when it is in a safe and protected place called the Uterus. The uterus is a part of a woman’s body and the baby grows inside the uterus for 9 months until it is ready to be born. When a woman has a baby in her uterus, her body has to grow bigger as the growing baby gets bigger. When this is happening the woman herself or other people might say that she is pregnant.</td>
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<td>Once the baby is ready to come out we say the woman is giving birth, or is going to deliver. It can take a long time, sometimes more than a day. Most mums give birth in a hospital and some give birth at home.</td>
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</table>

During labour or giving birth, the mother has pains called contractions. This is because the small hole in the uterus (the cervix) starts to stretch open to let the baby out and the uterus contracts to push it out. When it has stretched open wide enough the mother can push the baby out through the passage that leads from the woman’s uterus to outside of the woman’s body between her legs. It’s called the vagina and the baby will come out through the vagina to be born.

Sometimes a baby cannot be born through the vagina. This might be because the mother is too tired or unwell, or the baby is too big or sick. In this case the doctor will perform a surgical procedure to remove the baby through the abdomen or tummy. This is called a caesarean. Many babies are born this way.

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<td>Sperm are made in the testicles (testes). While baby boys are born with testicles, sperm is not produced until a boy begins puberty. Sperm are the male cells which can make a baby if they are joined with an egg (ova) from a female. (Early Stage 1-Stage 2)</td>
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It takes about 70 days to make sperm and then it is stored until it is released from the penis. (Stage 3-6)

Once released (or ejaculated) the sperm travel through tiny tubes mixing with
broken by a tampon?

- What is the emergency contraceptive pill and can young people be prescribed the emergency contraceptive pill by a doctor without their parents knowing?
- Can young people be prescribed the contraceptive pill by a doctor without their parents knowing?
- When can a young person get their own Medicare card?
- Will my parents have access to my Medicare records?

Other sample questions and answers for children and young people can be found at:

NSW Play Safe website – Sex Talk
ReachOut.com
Australian Government – Don’t risk an STIs website
Family Planning NSW FAQs

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fluid from the prostate gland and seminal vesicles until it leaves the body through the tiny hole at the end of the penis (urethra). (Stage 3-6)

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**How are twins made?**

Twins are conceived in two different ways. Identical twins are created when one sperm fertilises one egg and then the fertilised egg splits in two. Each goes on to grow into a separate foetus and baby. Fraternal (non-identical) twins are created when two eggs are released by the ovaries and both are fertilised by sperm.

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**How are babies made?**

Most of the babies that have ever been born in the world have been conceived by a man and woman having sexual intercourse (sex) together. Sometimes a man’s sperm isn’t working or he doesn’t have any. Sometimes a woman’s eggs are not working properly and she can’t become pregnant. Sometimes a woman doesn’t know a man she wants to have a baby with or two women or two men want to become parents together.

When a male and female couple want to make a baby, the man puts his hard (erect) penis inside the woman’s vagina and they have sex. When the man reaches his strongest sexy feeling (orgasm) sticky white stuff (semen) comes out of the end of the penis. This sticky stuff has sperm in it. One sperm needs to mix with an egg to start the process of making a baby.

It’s now possible for people who can’t conceive this way, such as women without a partner, couples who are infertile or people who are in same sex relationships to get help from a doctor. This is called assisted reproductive treatment (ART). One example of ART is invitro fertilisation (IVF) where the eggs or ova are removed from the woman and fertilised with sperm outside of the body. The embryo which is formed when the sperm joins the egg is then placed into the uterus by the doctor to develop into a baby.

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**What is sex?**

Sex can mean different things to different people. Most people think that sex is sexual intercourse, which is when a man puts his penis inside a woman’s vagina. There are other things people can do that are still part of sex, like touching, kissing or rubbing each other’s genitals (private parts).

Sex can happen between a man and a woman, two men or two women.

People have sex for different reasons. These reasons include: to show they care for or love each other, because it’s fun, because they feel sexy, or because they want to have a baby.

You don’t ever have to have sex if you don’t want to. No one is allowed to pressure you into having sex or make you do anything sexual. Most adults will eventually have sex, but not everyone chooses to be sexual, which is okay.

It’s your body and you are the boss of it.
Teacher note: The brief explanation of consent to sexual activity in the paragraph above may be sufficient for primary aged children if taught within a comprehensive sexuality education program that includes protective behaviours. It is not sufficient for secondary students. Teaching about consent, coercion and sexual violence in a secondary school program is essential in order to promote an understanding of consensual sexual activity, healthy relationships and positive sexual decision making.

What is ovulation? What is menstruation? What does it mean when a girl has her period?

Baby girls are born with two little things called ovaries inside them. In these ovaries are millions of eggs. When fertilised by sperm, these eggs become an embryo; after eight weeks they become a foetus; and after approximately nine months the baby is born.

The eggs are not ripe/ready until a girl starts to change into a woman. The time when this happens is called puberty. The sign that a girl has ripe eggs is when she gets her first period. During a period, blood comes out of a girl or woman’s vagina for a few days of each month. Most girls or women will have their period about once a month or every 28 days and can last on average between 4 – 8 days. Everyone’s body is different so periods can often be very different for different girls and women.

A woman is only fertile around the time when she releases an egg from the ovary. This usually happens once every month. The release of an egg is called ‘ovulation’. Pregnancy can only happen if a woman has intercourse in the few days leading up to and including ovulation.

When a girl or woman has an egg that is ready, it pops out of the ovary and travels down the tube until it gets to the uterus. If it does not meet a sperm on the way it doesn’t get fertilised and can’t become a baby. If an egg is not fertilised, the girl or woman gets her period and the egg comes out with the blood. You can’t see the egg as it’s too small. Next month the girl or woman will release another egg and the cycle starts all over again.

Source: Fertility and Assisted Reproduction: Teaching Module Published by Family Planning Victoria 2014.

How big does a penis get?

Everyone’s body is different and penises can often be different shapes and sizes. As the body grows and changes, most parts of a male body change in size, including the penis. There is no set size or measurement for how big a penis can grow as a boy develops into a man. The penis does get bigger when it becomes erect or hard and this is called an erection. An erection is when a penis gets hard, stiff and grows longer. Most penises are usually a similar size when they are erect.

What is a stiffy?

Some people use the word ‘stiffy’ when they are talking about an erection. An erection is when a penis gets hard, stiff and grows longer. The penis gets hard
and stiff because during an erection the penis fills with blood. Erections are a part of growth and development and can start to happen from the time a boy is born. Sometimes the word ‘stiffy’ is used around babies and younger children because it is an easier word to say than the word ‘erection’.

### What is a wet dream?

A wet dream usually refers to a situation where the body releases fluid from the penis or vagina while it is asleep. The term ‘wet dream’ is often used when referring to boys where they have experiences semen coming out of the penis while they have been sleeping. For boys wet dreams usually occur during puberty. A majority of boys will experience a wet dream at some stage of their lives as they grow and develop. Wet dreams can happen as often as every week or as little as once or twice in a lifetime. Girls can have wet dreams too but the experience is not often described using this term.

### Can girls have wet dreams?

Girls can have dreams that make them have sexual thoughts or feelings. These sexual feelings can cause a girl's vagina to become all stretchy and slippery. It's normal for a girl's vagina to become moist when she has sexual thoughts, or at different times of the month because of the changes in her hormones.

### What does it mean if someone is gay?

Most people in our world fall in love with, marry and have sex with a person of the opposite sex. Some people do all of these things with someone of the same sex; male and male, female and female. Some people can be attracted to the same sex but not refer to themselves as gay. Another appropriate term is same-sex attracted.

### Am I the only one having strange thoughts and feelings?

Everyone has different thoughts and feelings about their body while they are growing up. As your body grows and changes, so do your thoughts and feelings. It is important that people share and talk about their worries with a trusted friend or adult.

### What is a lesbian?

The term gay means that a person is attracted to someone of the same sex. Most people in our world fall in love with, marry and have sex with a person of the opposite sex. Some people do all of these things with someone of the same sex. When two males do all of these things together they are referred to as gay. When two females do all of these things together they may refer to themselves and identify as lesbians. Another appropriate term is a same-sex couple or a same sex relationship.
Can a girl get pregnant straight after her period?

It is possible for a female to become pregnant if she has sexual intercourse at any time after her period, however it is more likely to fall pregnant during the most fertile part of her cycle. The ovaries usually release an ovum (egg) about 10-14 days before a period is due. The ideal time for conception (pregnancy) to take place is when sexual intercourse happens during ovulation. However, every female is different.

Sexual intercourse at other times in the menstrual cycle can still result in pregnancy. The times of ovulation may vary in the menstrual cycle and sperm can stay alive and be present in the vagina or uterus for 3-5 days after sex.

Avoiding an unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections is best achieved by using contraception and/or a condom during sexual intercourse.

Can a hymen be broken by a tampon?

Hymens come in different shapes and sizes. Most have at least one opening where menstrual blood flows out. A hymen can break at any time such as while climbing a tree or during sports. A broken hymen is not an accurate measure of a woman's loss of virginity.

What is the emergency contraceptive pill (morning after pill) and can young people be prescribed the emergency contraceptive pill by a doctor without their parents knowing?

The Emergency Contraception Pill (ECP) is a special dose of a progestogen hormone which has been used for many years in common contraceptive pills. The ECP is usually taken in the form of a single tablet and is available without a prescription from the pharmacy.

If someone did not use contraception during sex, or perhaps used a condom but it broke, they may want to take the ECP to reduce the chance of pregnancy. Sometimes it is called the 'morning after pill' but that can be misleading because it can actually be effective if taken up to five days afterwards, not just the 'morning after'. However, the sooner it is taken the better its chance of working effectively.

Emergency contraception can work in two ways:
1. It can delay ovulation (the release of an egg from a woman's ovaries).
2. If ovulation has already taken place, it can stop a fertilised egg from implanting in the womb (or uterus)

Emergency contraception is available from pharmacies/chemists, hospitals, family planning centres, women's health centres and sexual health clinics. Whether someone goes to a pharmacy, a clinic or a hospital to get emergency contraception, they will be asked a few questions to see if the emergency contraception is suitable and safe for them. In some cases, the pharmacist may
refer the person to a doctor if they think it’s necessary.

The Emergency Contraceptive Pill cannot be used to protect you against STI’s and is only suitable as a backup to your regular method of contraception.

Source: Family Planning NSW, ReachOut.com, NSW Health.

Can young people be prescribed the contraceptive pill by a doctor without their parents knowing?

Medical contraceptives, such as the Pill, require a prescription that can only be obtained from a doctor. This is because some medication may not be safe for everyone to take, and a doctor must first explain how to use the medication safely, and whether an individual needs to avoid other drugs or alcohol while taking it.

Just like any medical treatment, the doctor must be satisfied that the person understands their advice and that it is in the person’s ‘best interests’ to receive a prescription without parental consent. When something is in a person’s best interests, it means that overall it is good for their health and wellbeing.

The doctor may follow written guidelines when making this decision. These guidelines include considering things like whether:
- the person understands the information and advice the doctor is giving
- the doctor thinks parents should be involved
- the person is likely to have sex even if they don’t have contraceptives
- whether physical or mental health are likely to suffer without contraception.

If a person is 16 or older, understands the doctor’s advice, and agrees that contraceptives are safe for them to take, they will usually be given a prescription without needing parent or carer’s consent.

If someone is under 16, the doctor may ask them to consider talking to their parents about contraception, if they haven’t already. If the person doesn’t want their parent or carer involved, this should be made clear to the doctor at the beginning of the appointment.

In the end, it is up to your doctor whether to give an individual a prescription for medical contraceptives.

When can a young person get their own Medicare card?

To get a Medicare card someone must be enrolled in Medicare. If a young person is listed on their parent’s or carer’s Medicare card, then this means they are eligible and already enrolled in Medicare.

If a young person is not listed on their parent’s or carer’s Medicare card, they need to apply for their own card. This can be done when a person is over 15
years old.

If someone is younger than 15, they might still be able to have a card of their own, but remain listed on their parent’s card as well. This card is called a ‘duplicate’ card, because it is a copy of the parent’s card. A duplicate card can be useful if a young person lived away from home or with other relatives.

Source: Lawstuff Australia

Will my parents have access to my Medicare records?

If a young person’s name is on their parent’s Medicare card or they have a duplicate card, parent’s will usually have access to the young person’s Medicare records. If someone is 14 or older, Medicare will not give information about medical treatment to parents without the young person’s consent, but parents may still be able to see that the young person has visited a doctor. This is because the information will be listed if parents apply for a Medicare Tax Benefit Statement but bulk bill and in-hospital claims will not be included in the Tax Benefit Statement.

If a young person has their own Medicare Card (not a duplicate), then their parents will not have access to any of their Medicare records.

Source: Lawstuff Australia