

FOOTBALL, PUBERTY & YOUR CHANGING BODY

WHAT IS PUBERTY?

Puberty is the name for when your body begins to **develop and change**. This usually happens between the ages of 7 and 13 (but it could be later) and your brain makes a special chemical (hormone) that starts the changes of puberty.

HOW WILL MY BODY CHANGE?

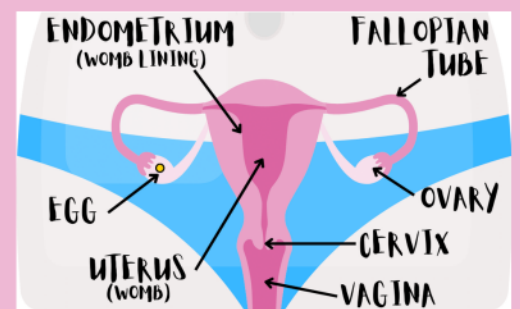
You will get **taller and heavier**, your face changes shape, your hips get wider and more curvy, your **breasts start to grow**, your body sweats more, hair starts to grow under your armpits and on and around your pubic area (genitals), and eventually you will have a **menstrual cycle**.

WHAT IS A MENSTRUAL CYCLE?

When puberty is reached an **egg is released** from an ovary inside your body each month (have a look at this diagram). The **egg travels** through the fallopian tube to the **uterus (womb)**. If the egg is not fertilised by a sperm, the egg and the lining of the uterus leave the body through the vagina as a **period (menstruation)**.

WHAT IS A PERIOD?

A period is when blood & cells from your womb lining leave your body through your vagina as they are no longer needed. They are a **healthy and normal part of life** - nature's way of preparing your body for possibly having a baby when you are older.



When will my first period start?

Usually between the ages of **10 and 16 years old**, about 2 years after your breasts develop and after you have pubic hair. But remember, **everyone is different**.

What happens when you have a period?

When you have your period you need something to soak up the blood and cells as they leave your body. There are lots of things you can use for this, **speak to your trusted adult** about what might work best for you.

All Hitchin Belles coaches' kit bags are equipped with 'period packs'. These contain sanitary products and a change of kit and underwear in case you ever need them whilst at training or matches.

Can I play football or other sports when I have my period?

Yes! There is **no reason not to play** football or other sports. Sometimes you **may not feel like** playing sports when you have your period, but **exercise can actually help you feel better**. Try it and **see if it helps you**.

