

# Is This Normal?

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At *Sex, Etc.* we often get questions that start with something like, “Is it normal that...?” Many teens are worried about whether their breasts or penises are big enough, small enough or the right shape. So, in response to these concerns, we’ve compiled lists of what’s “normal” for guys and girls and what you should have your doctor check out.

## The Penis and Testicles

### What’s Normal?

There are all different kinds of penises. That’s right, ALL. Nature has made all of our body parts in varying shapes and sizes, so it’s no surprise that **penises come in varying shapes and sizes**, too. And no matter the length or width, penises all work the same.

**Two testicles that are relatively the same size.** One can be a little bigger than the other and one generally hangs a bit lower in the **scrotum**, the loose bag of skin behind the penis that holds the testes.

Does your penis **curve** a little to the left or right? No problem! That’s normal, too.

### See Your Doctor If...

You find any **bumps** or **lumps** on your scrotum.

Your **foreskin**—for those of you who aren’t circumcised—becomes red and itches or is painful when you draw it back.

You have a **rash** or **warts** on your genitals or groin, experience **pain during urination** or have **discharge** that’s not urine, pre-cum or semen. You could have a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

**Remember:** The images of the body you see on television and the Internet (including porn) have often been modified by a plastic surgeon or a team of people who get paid to make someone look “perfect.” Don’t let these images make you self-conscious about the way you are.

What **is** important to remember is that no two people are exactly alike. And that’s normal.



## Breasts

### What's Normal?

Breasts come in **all different shapes, colors and sizes**.

One breast may be **slightly bigger** than the other. And you're probably the only person who notices.

The **areola** is a light-pink to dark-brown circle in the center of each breast, surrounding the nipple.

All women have **bumps** on their areolas, and some have **hair** on their areolas.

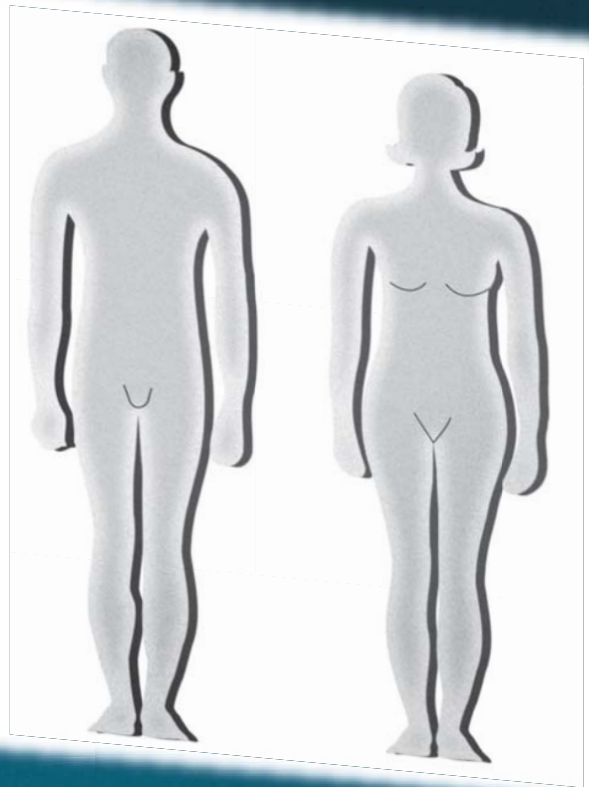
Areolas can range in size from **small to large**.

In the middle of each areola is the **nipple**. Some nipples stick out while others never surface.

When breasts are touched or it's cold, the nipples will **fill with blood** and become firm.

### See Your Doctor If...

You find a **lump, discharge** from the nipple or **puckering** of the skin.



**Need a doctor? Call 1-800-230-PLAN (7526) for the nearest Planned Parenthood Health Center.**

## The Vulva and Vagina

### What's Normal?

The **vulva** is the outer part of a girl's or woman's genitals. It includes the clitoris, labia, vaginal opening, urethra and anus. The vulva may be a different color than the rest of your body, especially when you get turned on. It could be anywhere from purple to brown to pink to red.

The **clitoris** can range in size and sensitivity. The clitoris may be barely visible and stay tucked inside the hood right above the urethra. The clitoris and its hood could also be large and always visible.

There are two sets of **labia** or "lips"—the outer labia and the inner labia. In some, the labia may lie flat and close to the vulva. Or they can be longer and the inner or outer labia may hang a little. One of your inner labia might be longer than the other.

The **color of the labia can vary**, too. It can match the skin on your thighs or be darker, lighter or more pink, red, black or brown.

The **entrance to the vagina** may be bumpy for some and smooth for others. The vagina is a strong muscle, so after it stretches to accommodate a finger, penis or baby during childbirth, it goes back to its original size.

You do not get **"looser"** after you have sex.

The **anus** is often a different color from the rest of the body. It is usually darker and can range from brown to pink. It has a puckered texture.

The **hymen**—the thin piece of tissue that partially covers the vaginal opening in most women—varies from woman to woman. Some are thick and some are thin. With the onset of puberty, the hymen stretches more easily due to increased estrogen levels. And some women don't have a hymen at all.

It is typical to **shed a little blood** when the hymen tears. If the hymen is very thick, a woman may have a difficult time inserting something into her vagina, whether it be a tampon, penis or finger.

It is also natural and normal to have either a lot of **pubic hair** or a little.

**Vaginal discharge** is fluid that is released every day from the vagina. It can be milky, sticky or clear—like egg whites. The amount of fluid released varies throughout the month and increases when sexually aroused.

### See Your Doctor If...

You feel like you **have to pee** without being able to or feel **burning** while peeing. This might be a sign of a **urinary tract infection (UTI)**, which is not always related to any sexual behavior. UTIs are easily treated with an antibiotic from your health care provider.

There is **redness and itching** around the vulva and inside the vagina. This might be a sign of a yeast infection. There can also be a white, thick, clumpy discharge that looks like cottage cheese. The vulva can be sore, too, or it may hurt to pee.

You have **pain, burning** or a **discharge** that has an unusual or very strong odor. These could be symptoms of an infection.

You have **discharge, bleeding** or **pain during sex**. This could also be a symptom of an infection.

**Still concerned your vulva might not be "normal"? Check out *Body Drama* by Nancy Redd. This teen-friendly health book includes pictures of vulvas. You'll see for yourself that no two vulvas are exactly alike. Check out our interview with Redd on page 17.**