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YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN

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AM I NORMAL? GROWING UP IS NOT EASY!

Wally Cat wants you to think back over the past year. Have you grown taller? Have other kids in your class grown taller? What about your clothes? Can you still wear your favorite jeans? As you age, your body changes too! As each of us grows, we grow at different rates, even Wally Cat!

Everyone is different!

Next time you go shopping, look around at the people. They are all different! This is good because there is no one type of person.

We all look different because of our parents. We have a special code given to us by our parents — our genes (pronounced like your favorite pants: jeans!). Your genes are slightly different from everyone else's. Your genes already determined your hair color and eye color before you were born. They will also determine how much you will grow and how tall you will be.

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Although genes have a lot of control over how much you grow, your body can be influenced by other things such as:

- how much food you eat
- what type of food you eat
- how much sleep you get at night
- how much exercise you get

You want your body to be as strong as it can be, so make sure you eat foods that are good for you, go to bed at a good time, and exercise!

Growth Spurts

You should not worry if you grow a lot in a very little amount of time.

- Girls usually have a growth spurt between 7 and 13 years of age
- Boys usually have a growth spurt between 9 and 15 years of age

Growing pains

Sometimes when we are growing, it may feel a little painful.

- Usually happens between ages 3–5 and 8–12
- Usually happens at night and go away by morning
- Usually feel pain in your muscles

What can you do to feel better?

- Stretch your muscles like you do in physical education class
- Put a heating pad on your legs

Should you go to the doctor?

You should go to the doctor if you:

- Have a fever with the pain
- You limp when you walk
- Your legs look red
- Your legs are swollen

If your pain continues during the day, talk to your parents or guardian about it!

If you are worried about how your body is changing, please talk to your parents or guardian.



ACTIVITY

With the help of a parent or guardian, start to track how much you grow. Have your parent or guardian measure how tall you are and write it down. Every 6 months go back and do it again. You can track how much you have grown over 1 year, 2 years or more.

WORD SCRAMBLE

EENG _____

(Hint) a special code given to us by our parents

GWROHT RUPST _____

(Hint) growing a lot in a little amount of time
(2 words)

ARPNTE _____

(Hint) someone you should talk to if you are worried about your growth



REFERENCES:

- Kids Health. "What a pain! Kids and Growing Pains" The Nemours Foundation. August 2009. www.kidshealth.org/kid
- Kids Health. "I'm growing up – but am I normal?" The Nemours Foundation. May 2008. www.kidshealth.org/kid

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