

What do bleeding disorders have to do with all this?

As a caregiver, it's important to recognize there may be additional challenges for girls with bleeding disorders, the most common being the onset of heavy menstrual bleeding. With these challenges come additional conversations for your young person and healthcare providers.

Setting expectations about their puberty experience and discussing a treatment plan with healthcare providers is crucial. Work with them to ensure they have the tools to manage their symptoms and emotions throughout this experience. They should know there is no reason to be ashamed of their bleeding disorder.

Work together to practice having difficult conversations where they are comfortable expressing their symptoms and advocating for their needs with your support.

Conclusion

Puberty is curious, enlightening, and question-filled time for you and your loved one. With some education, conversation, and little bit of stepping out of the comfort zone you'll both learn and grow through it together.

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TIME TO TALK PUBERTY: A Guide for Girls with Bleeding Disorders

Tips for Parents & Caregivers



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What Do I Say?

When a child has questions about puberty, it is important to create a safe space for your loved one by listening, respecting their right to privacy, and their right to their feelings. Discussing puberty is a series of conversations over the years. You may be wondering, “What do I say?, How do I start this conversation?” Feeling confident about the subject matter will make these conversations easier.

You can prepare by:

- Reviewing this book ahead of time.
- Speaking with your child’s healthcare provider privately to get all your questions answered. The healthcare provider can offer advice on how to approach the conversation.
- Use the correct terminology when describing menstruation and body parts.

Knowing the facts can help when talking to your young person. Practice in the mirror, or with a friend, relative or even an older sibling to help get the jitters out.

Your personal values and beliefs can affect the discussion. For example, ask yourself where you stand on debatable topics, such as birth control, relationships and healthy ways to handle emotions. Do they know and understand your values? Can they see you modeling them daily?

Conversation Tips

Start the conversations early. You may want to wait till they come to ask you questions, but that day may never arrive. It’s perfectly fine for you to initiate these conversations. The key is consistent and open dialogue where both sides should feel they can speak honestly and without judgement. Put yourself in their shoes, and remember puberty isn’t easy or straightforward.

- Try your best to answer each question, but if you don’t know the answer, suggest that you can find the answer together. The most important thing is to listen with compassion and without judgement. Suggest finding out the answer together. Be mindful that putting it off or deflecting could send a message that it’s not okay or important enough to talk about.
- Encourage the young person to talk about their thoughts. An open exchange of ideas can establish the values and beliefs you each hold.
- Don’t be alarmed if they don’t respond or feel uncomfortable with the conversation. Give them time to process the conversation. Remind them that it’s okay to not want to talk about it but you’ll be available when they are.
- Give them a book to read on their own. Discuss it together afterwards.
- Watching tv shows together can sometimes spark conversations.

Potential questions to ask:

1. Are you noticing any changes in your body?
2. Are you having any new feelings you’re not used to?
3. Are you ever sad sometimes and not sure why?

Remember all the emotions and thoughts that may arise. It’s your role as a caregiver to help guide them through this time. No one expects perfection, but they do expect your best shot!