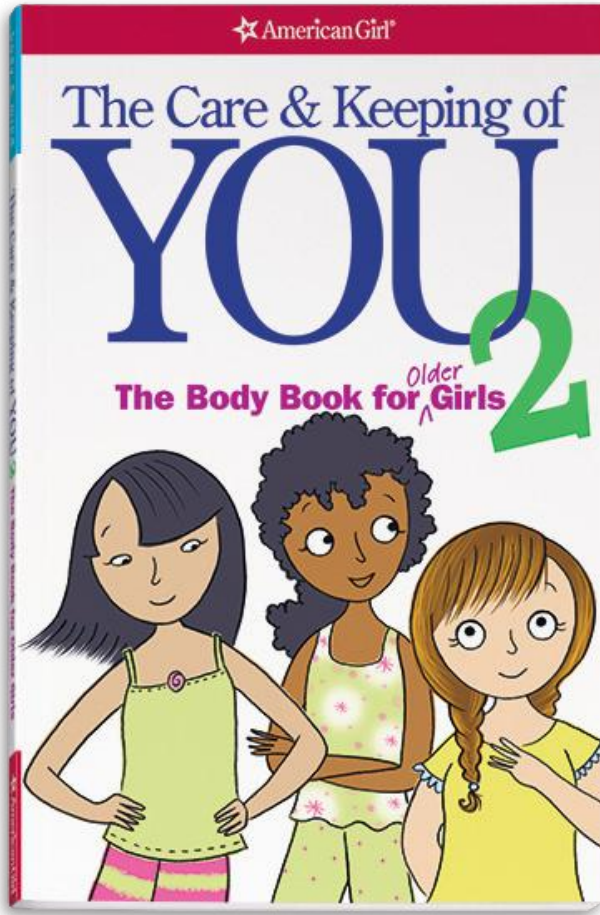


Read excerpts from *The Care & Keeping of You 2*



Dear Reader,

As you are getting older, everything about you is changing: the way you look, the way you are shaped, the way you feel, the way you react, and the things that you find interesting. This happens for every girl your age, but sometimes it feels as if you are the only one going through it.

This book will help you realize that the changes are a normal part of growing up. Starting where *The Care and Keeping of You* leaves off, this guide has even more information about your changing body so that you understand what's going on. And then it explains your changing brain, your changing feelings, and your changing world. Each of these is a part of going through puberty. Most of the changes you see in yourself are normal, but they may not always feel that way to you. Reading and learning more about them really helps.

Most important, this book will teach you how to ask questions when you are worried. Your parents are there for you, and so are other trusted adults, such as doctors and family members. Just remember that they all went through puberty, too, so they probably have the answers to your questions. If they don't, they can help you find the answers.

You are growing and changing. This book will help you understand those changes and continue to celebrate you!

Your friends at American Girl





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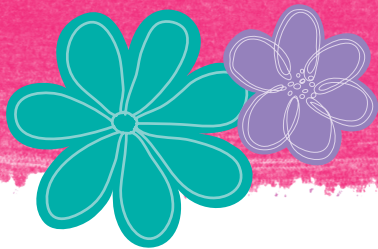
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Keeping Clean

Soap is key in helping to keep you stink-free!



Your pubic area, which is the V-shaped patch between your hip bones and your legs, also needs to be cleaned. But you may want to ditch the soap when you do because soap can be irritating. Just take a wet washcloth and gently wipe between the labia (see page 26) to clean the area.



Antibacterial hand sanitizers seem to be available just about everywhere you go: schools, grocery stores, doctors' offices. While hand sanitizers are OK to use when a sink isn't available, washing with soap and water (and making a good lather) is always the best choice.

Suds Up

As you start to go through puberty, your body will make smells it never made before—and not great smells, either! Your feet may get stinky (a smell you may notice when you take your shoes and socks off after a long day at school). Or perhaps your feet will smell fine, but your armpits will not. Regardless of where the stink starts, washing with soap is a simple solution.

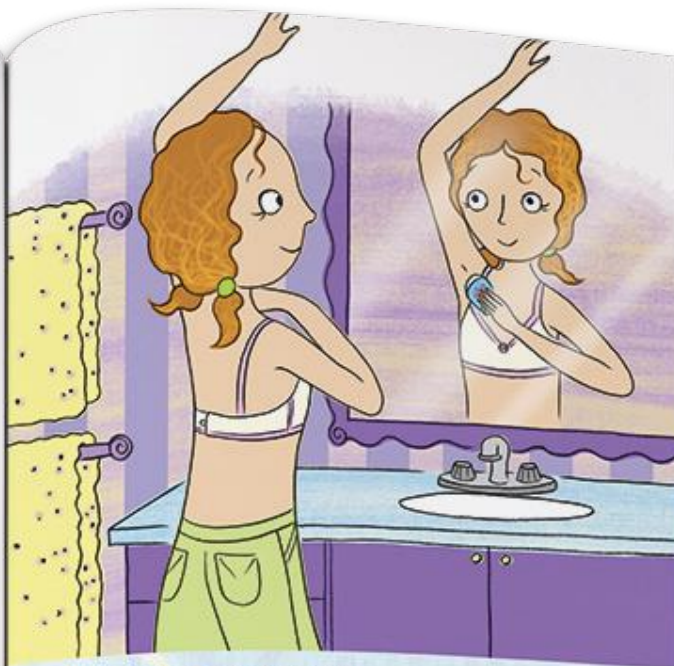
Whether you take a bath or a shower, use soap, lather it up, and wash yourself from head to toe. Use a washcloth, sponge, or loofah to help. Almost any soap will do, but if you have sensitive skin, stay away from soaps with dyes or perfumes, and skip using bubbles when taking a bath.

While most girls your age need to take a bath or shower every day, you don't need to wash your hair quite as often. Talk to your mom or dad about the best schedule for you.

Keep Your Hands Clean

When you touch something—such as a doorknob, a desk, or a computer keyboard—it is covered with germs from other people who have touched it before. Your body is meant to fight different kinds of germs naturally. But if you put your germ-covered fingers in your mouth (for example, when eating a sandwich or biting your nails), the germs can go right inside your body. And even though your body can fight off most germs most of the time, sometimes you may get sick.

The quick fix is to wash your hands, before you eat and always after you use the bathroom. That way all of the germs you've collected go right down the drain. Use soap and water and—if you can—wash for about 20 seconds, which is how long it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.



Deodorants and Antiperspirants

Armpits can be particularly stinky areas because they get very hot and sweaty, and then that sweat combines with the bacteria that live on your skin to make you smell. You actually sweat (and can make smells) all over your body, but because the skin is folded over in the armpits, the sweat stays around longer, creating a better chance to stink. Other parts of the body where there isn't a lot of air breezing by—like sock-covered feet—sweat and smell the same way.

Lots of products are available to keep bad armpit smells away. Deodorants do what their name says: they de-odorize. This means that you'll still sweat but the sweat won't smell when deodorant is around. Antiperspirants are entirely different. These stop ("anti") sweating ("perspiration"). If you don't sweat in the first place, you won't smell. Some girls choose one type of product, some choose a combination (antiperspirant plus deodorant), and some choose none at all, sticking with bathing instead. A parent can help you decide what works best for you.





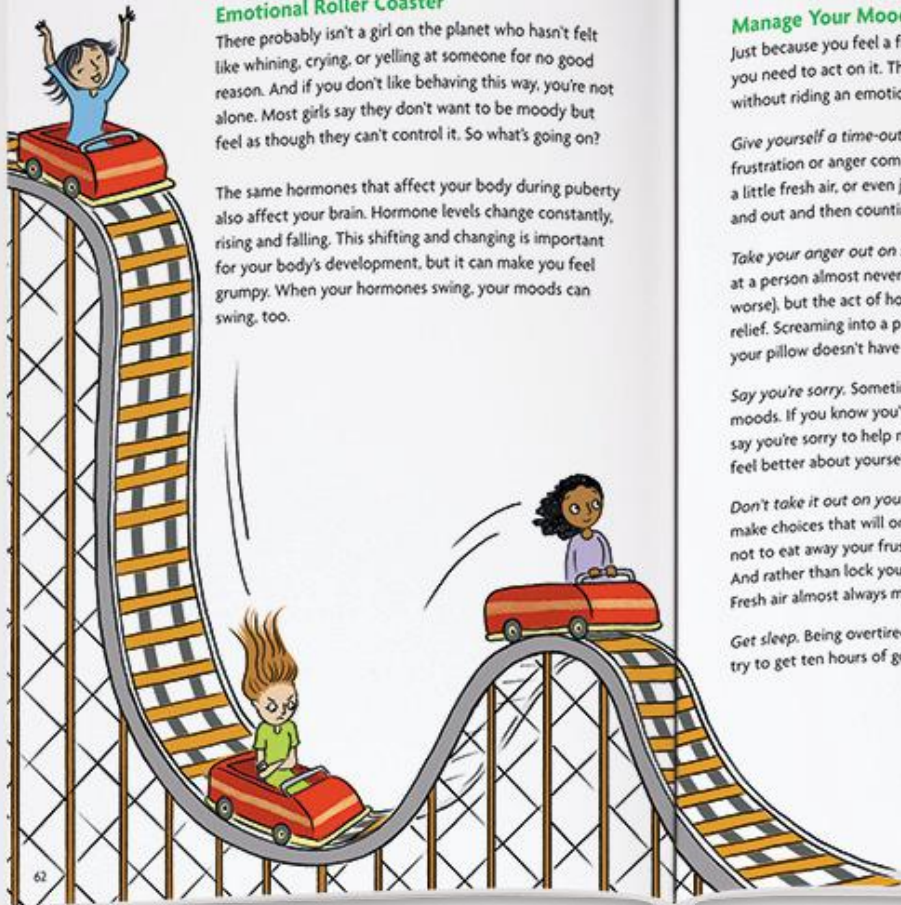
Moody You

"Grrr! Why do I feel this way?"

Emotional Roller Coaster

There probably isn't a girl on the planet who hasn't felt like whining, crying, or yelling at someone for no good reason. And if you don't like behaving this way, you're not alone. Most girls say they don't want to be moody but feel as though they can't control it. So what's going on?

The same hormones that affect your body during puberty also affect your brain. Hormone levels change constantly, rising and falling. This shifting and changing is important for your body's development, but it can make you feel grumpy. When your hormones swing, your moods can swing, too.



Manage Your Moods

Just because you feel a freak-out coming on doesn't mean you need to act on it. There are lots of ways to feel better without riding an emotional roller coaster.

Give yourself a time-out. Take a break when you feel frustration or anger coming on. Leave the room and get a little fresh air, or even just try taking a deep breath in and out and then counting to ten.

Take your anger out on something, not someone. Yelling at a person almost never helps (and often makes things worse), but the act of hollering or crying can feel like a relief. Screaming into a pillow makes it a lot quieter—and your pillow doesn't have any feelings for you to hurt!

Say you're sorry. Sometimes you just can't help your moods. If you know you've hurt or upset someone else, say you're sorry to help make the situation better and feel better about yourself.

Don't take it out on your body. If you are moody, don't make choices that will only cause you to feel worse. Try not to eat away your frustration, especially with junk food. And rather than lock yourself in your room, get outside! Fresh air almost always makes you feel better.

Get sleep. Being overtired can cause moods to swing, so try to get ten hours of good rest per night when you can.



Ditch the Drama

Since all girls your age are going through puberty and everyone is experiencing moodiness at random times, getting a group of girls together can lead to a lot of drama. If you see girls acting in a way you don't like, excuse yourself. Or don't join in the first place.

