



Family Planning Victoria Podcast Transcript – ‘Doing It’

Taking care of your body

- Anne: [00:01](#) This podcast contains discussion about adult topics. Use your judgment if there are little ears around. Welcome to Doing It. This is a podcast made by The Family Planning Victoria Schools Education Team. We have decided to call it Doing It because students often ask how to do it, and parents often ask how to do it, meaning how you talk about sex and all the things we talk about in class.
- Anne: [00:28](#) My name is Anne. I'm part of the Family Planning Victoria's Schools Education Team. We go to schools and run classes for all year levels on bodies, growing up, puberty, sex, reproduction. This podcast is for parents and carers of school aged children so we can share what goes on in a relationship and sexuality education class and help support these sorts of conversations at home.
- Anne: [00:51](#) Our first series of podcasts we are talking about puberty, what it is and talking through some of the big changes that can happen in puberty and explaining how we talk about this in class. We generally start talking about puberty with students from about grade three or four. By grade five, six, students should be getting lots of information about puberty.
- Anne: [01:12](#) In this episode, we're going to talk about the ways that young people need to be taking care of their bodies. Puberty is when someone's body starts looking like an adult body. Along with this might come an increased need for privacy and independence. So, your young person needs to have a good idea of the things they need to do to look after their own body from washing to keeping clothes clean to managing pimples and using deodorant.
- Anne: [01:38](#) I'll be talking to the Family Planning Victoria Schools educator, Sue, about the sort of things we would talk through in one of our classes with students from about grade three until about

grade six. So, Sue, thank you for talking to me and letting me ask you questions.

Sue: [01:53](#) You're welcome.

Anne: [01:54](#) My first question to you is, do young people going through puberty smell? Why?

Sue: [02:00](#) Well, yes they do to differing degrees with each young person. The reason why is the sweat glands become more active during puberty, and the bacteria that naturally lives on the skin mixes with the sweat and that causes BO. It's manageable.

Anne: [02:15](#) Yep. So, how do young people manage BO?

Sue: [02:18](#) Washing regularly. Showering every day, sometimes more if they're exercising a lot. Using soap when they shower. Then deodorant but preferably a roll-on deodorant, not a spray. We know when young people use sprays, if there's a lot of young people together all those sprays mix together and they don't create a nice smell anymore. So, avoid using spray deodorants. Aim for using a roll-on deodorant. It's better to use the deodorant before you smell it. It doesn't mask BO, it helps to prevent it.

Anne: [02:51](#) If something says body spray on the bottle, that means perfume. So, if you're a young man and you're thinking of using deodorant but all it says on it is body spray, then it's just going to make two smells on your body, body odor plus the perfume. The only way of really getting rid of body odor is by having a shower with soap.

Sue: [03:09](#) Yes. Absolutely. Sometimes you find young people when they're exercising a lot might have two or three showers a day, because they're getting up in the morning, having a shower or in the evening before bed having a shower, go to their sport, have a shower again, and so on.

Anne: [03:23](#) Yep. In primary school, often they don't change clothes for sport, but by high school they probably will. They'll probably change into a sports uniform, sweat into that-

Sue: [03:34](#) And then change out of it.

Anne: [03:35](#) ... and change out of it.

- Sue: [03:35](#) Make sure you take those clothes out of your bag when you get home. Otherwise, your bag and then your locker, and then the corridor, et cetera will smell.
- Anne: [03:42](#) And then your house and then your room.
- Sue: [03:43](#) Yes.
- Anne: [03:43](#) Yeah. So, washing clothes when they smell.
- Sue: [03:46](#) Absolutely.
- Anne: [03:47](#) That's something I often say in class is check if your clothes smell. Clothes go in the wash not just when you spill things on your clothes, but if they smell especially under the arms.
- Sue: [03:56](#) I think really young people, pre-puberty young people, tend to be able to wear their t-shirts for a couple of days in a row. Once you've hit puberty and that BO is coming through, you really do need to change anything that's contacting your underarms on a daily basis.
- Anne: [04:11](#) So, in class we are often talking about private body parts, and we would talk about looking after your own body. What messages do we have about keeping private body parts clean?
- Sue: [04:22](#) Well, we generally talk about it like it's any other body part. You're cleaning them just like you would clean your arms, your legs and so on. You don't need to scrub hard though. If you've got a penis, you need to pull back the foreskin and let the water rush on it washing away any dead skin cells or salt deposits naturally on your skin. In terms of vulvas and vaginas, there's a lot of advertising around vaginal sprays for keeping you fresh. Not necessary. They can, in fact, change the natural bacteria or the natural PH of your vagina. So, all you really need to do is shower again. Shower regularly and making sure that the water splashes into those private areas.
- Anne: [05:05](#) Yep. Vaginas are self-cleaning, so they don't need that. Girls, as they start puberty, will probably notice vaginal discharge, which is the vagina cleaning itself on its own. They might think they need to use things like liners or pads every single day.
- Sue: [05:18](#) Not necessary, no, no.
- Anne: [05:19](#) Yep. So, changing underwear every day.

- Sue: [05:21](#) Every day, yes.
- Anne: [05:22](#) Having a shower every day is fine. Girls might also ask for extra information about keeping clean or managing hygiene during menstruation or during their period. What advice or what would we tell them in a class?
- Sue: [05:36](#) Well, what we usually tell them is the hygiene that you need during menstruation is the same as any other time during puberty. That is, again, the showering, but it's about wearing tampons or pads and changing them on a regular basis. We recommend three to four hours, and we do tell them that's an average because it depends on you and how much blood you're losing, how much menstrual fluid you're losing and changing it regularly and changing your underpants regularly.
- Sue: [06:02](#) Girls often think that they will smell even more during menstruation. They don't really. It's the discharge that smells. So, if you are changing your pads or tampons regularly, that smell is gone.
- Anne: [06:16](#) Also, they need to know where to dispose of pads.
- Sue: [06:19](#) Absolutely.
- Anne: [06:19](#) So, talking about sanitary bins and having a bin in the bathroom at home.
- Sue: [06:23](#) Yes. Asking your grownups at home where they would like you to throw it, because we do talk to kids and young people about that in terms of some people prefer not to have it in the kitchen bin. Some prefer to put it straight out into the big bin outside. Some have it, as you say, a bathroom bin. It's up to ... having that conversation with your grownups at home, perhaps the person who's supplying you with the pads or tampons that can help you to ... how would I dispose of this and where.
- Anne: [06:49](#) Even if it's not happening to your young person in your house, they might have friends over for sleepovers. You still need those options to dispose of pads at home. Another thing we talk about is pimples. So, what would we say about why pimples occur and how to manage that?
- Sue: [07:05](#) Pimples are a natural, again, part of puberty unfortunately. They occur by the hormones that are racing through your body during puberty producing excess oils, and those oils sit on your skin mixed with the natural bacteria, mixed with the dirt in the

atmosphere. Can't avoid that. So, that's where pimples occur. The best way to manage it is, again, clean face, just keeping clean. Showering regularly. Washing your face after sweating. Even if you don't have time for a shower and you've been running around at school, you can just get a towel and wipe your face or go to the bathroom and paper towel, wash your face.

- Anne: [07:44](#) It's not necessary to use special cleaning-
- Sue: [07:47](#) Creams, no.
- Anne: [07:48](#) ... products, or harsh soaps, or anything like that?
- Sue: [07:50](#) Nothing like that.
- Anne: [07:50](#) Even just warm water is going to open the pores up and clean out some of that extra oil.
- Sue: [07:54](#) And getting the dirt off the face, yes. It's not the oils themselves that create the pimples. It's the mixture with the dirt, so just keeping your face clean. You can buy pimple creams. They're well advertised. Really unnecessary in my opinion, because the packaging usually says that the pimples will disappear in three to five days if you use this product. You know what? That pimple will disappear in three to five days anyway, and then another one will probably occur.
- Sue: [08:21](#) If, however, you find yourself getting something called acne, which is not the same as pimples, it's more a case of having so many pimples on your face that they're starting to become red and uncomfortable, then you can talk to a grownup to perhaps see a doctor and see if you do need antibiotics for that. The best way is, as I say, keeping your face clean, good nutrition, exercise and sleep, the general health things for good health.
- Anne: [08:48](#) So, all the things we know is good for our body, that's going to maybe help pimples.
- Sue: [08:52](#) Absolutely.
- Anne: [08:52](#) Some people just get them anyway, because that's their genetic makeup.
- Sue: [08:55](#) Absolutely. Yes. You can find in one family one person gets a face full of pimples, and the sibling might just get one or two here and there. Luck of the draw.

- Anne: [09:05](#) I usually recommend not to squeeze pimples.
- Sue: [09:07](#) Oh, I know.
- Anne: [09:07](#) I know it's really, really tempting. People want to squeeze them. Even grownups at home might want to squeeze pimples on their young person. It's always my advice just to leave them alone.
- Sue: [09:16](#) Otherwise, it can cause scarring.
- Anne: [09:18](#) Yes.
- Sue: [09:18](#) They will go away, and you'll look around you and you'll see that other people have got them too. It's just an unfortunate part of puberty. The good part of puberty is that you're growing into an adult.
- Anne: [09:28](#) Another thing we talk about in class is hair growing on someone's body. We might sometimes talk about hair removal, maybe shaving faces or removing hair somewhere else on their body. What advice or what would you say in class about hair removal?
- Sue: [09:44](#) Firstly, we would reiterate the fact that having hair in new places is perfectly normal. Pubic hair, underarm hair, facial hair, perfectly normal, perfectly normal to do nothing about it and keep that hair there, because that's you. If you do choose, and it is a choice, to remove some of those hairs, there are choices. You can shave, but we recommend that you make sure that you're not shaving dry skin. So, you might use soap or some sort of shaving cream or lotion.
- Sue: [10:15](#) If you're waxing, you can do it at home and it's often a put the wax on, use a strip of cloth that comes with it that you take off, or you can go to a beauty salon and have it done there. Yes, it does hurt a little bit, but a lot of people do it. There's also creams that you can use that go on and then kill the hairs.
- Anne: [10:34](#) Yeah. [crosstalk 00:10:36] On young skin they can be quite sensitive.
- Sue: [10:38](#) Harsh, yes. So, that's not something we would recommend for young people. Our biggest recommendation is to let it go. Just leave it for a while until you're a bit older, and then make the choice. Then you'll know what you actually want to do, because it's perfectly normal to have those hairs.

- Anne: [10:54](#) Yeah. So, it's a good message that young people have that whatever is happening to their body is normal for them.
- Sue: [10:58](#) Normal, absolutely. Some are very hairy and some not so much. Again, we're all different and that's the joy of life.
- Anne: [11:04](#) What else do teens need to know about looking after their own body?
- Sue: [11:09](#) Well, as we know, there's only one other time in your life when your body is having so many changes, and that is during being a toddler. So, lots of sleep just like a toddler. You may think that you're all grown up now and don't need, but you do. You need a lot of sleep because your body is doing a lot of good work. You need good exercise, plenty of good exercise. It can just be running around with the dog in the backyard. It can be going for a walk, or it can be a sport. It doesn't really matter what the exercise is as long as you're moving.
- Sue: [11:38](#) Good nutrition. Good nutrition is good at all stages of life but particularly during the stage of so much growth. A lot of it is mental growth. You might not think you're growing. You are internally as well. Making sure you do things that make you happy like going out with friends, having fun with your family, playing with, again, the dog, dancing to your favorite song. Doing things that make you happy really can make you feel good about yourself generally.
- Anne: [12:03](#) So, if someone's looking after their body and they're doing all the things they know is good for their body like sleep, eating well, having fun sometimes, doing exercise sometimes, then their mind is going to be healthier-
- Sue: [12:15](#) Absolutely, yes. Then you'll be able to manage much better everything that's thrown at you during those years.
- Anne: [12:21](#) Yep. While mood swings are happening-
- Sue: [12:22](#) Absolutely, they are.
- Anne: [12:23](#) ... and body changes, and social changes. Yeah, so to get into those habits early before they get to high school is a really good plan.
- Sue: [12:31](#) Absolutely, yes. When it becomes more challenging when your mood swings and your romances and all of those challenging things that happen during the teen years, if you're doing all the

right things beforehand, those challenges will still happen but you'll manage them better.

- Anne: [12:45](#) Hopefully.
- Sue: [12:46](#) Hopefully, yes.
- Anne: [12:47](#) Sue, thank you so much.
- Sue: [12:49](#) You're welcome.
- Anne: [12:49](#) Thanks for your wise words. See you later.
- Sue: [12:53](#) Thank you.
- Anne: [12:55](#) Hopefully that's given everyone a bit of an insight into the sort of things we would say in class to young people. Here's a little summary of the things we just said. It's a really good idea to talk about managing body odor with deodorant, washing and changing clothes. Encourage regular face washing, even before pimples start happening. If a young person has lots of pimples which never really go away, a doctor might be able to treat with medication.
- Anne: [13:23](#) Talk about different methods of hair removal so it can be done safely, and remind that hair removal is a choice. Teach people how to wash using the washing machine. Keep reminding about dental care and teeth brushing. The younger a person is, the more sleep they need. Teens need more sleep than they think and more than they often get.
- Anne: [13:45](#) There's some resources available online about young people looking after their own body. Raisingchildren.net.au has some information, so does Kids Spot. If you want more information about Family Planning Victoria, you can look at our website fpv.org.au. You can also follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter. Please look out for our next episode of the podcast or subscribe so you don't miss out. Thanks for listening.