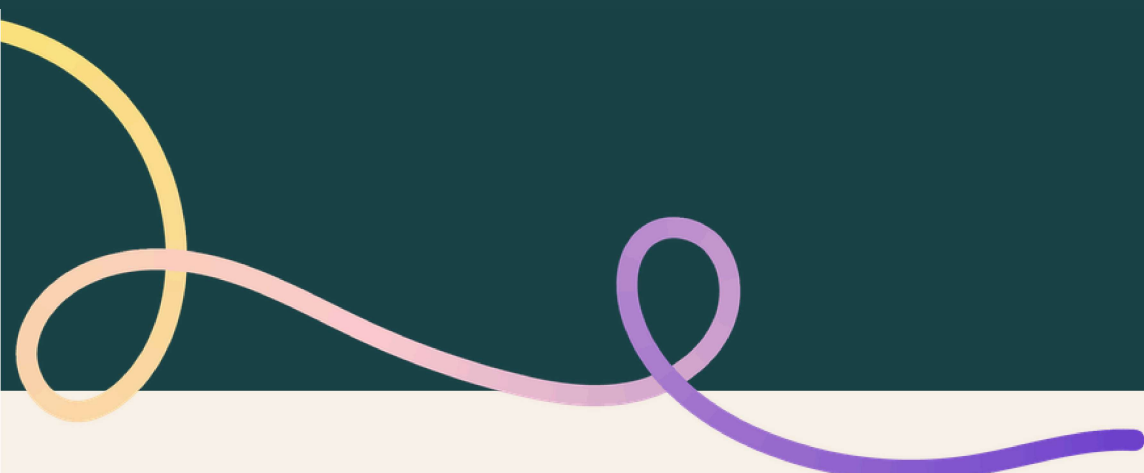


A factsheet about
**Puberty, periods
and body care**



Understanding **Zoe**

<https://understandingzoe.com>

Copyright 2026

Puberty, periods and body care

A parent's guide for parents of Autistic children.
Supporting your child through growing up, hygiene and staying safe, with less stress.



Use a pad, step by step

Learning to manage periods is a big step, and for many children clear, concrete steps can make it feel far less daunting. There is no single right way to do this: breaking it into small pieces, practising calmly where there is no pressure, and letting your child go at their own pace can all help.

- 1 Get a clean pad.** Take a fresh pad, and have a bin nearby for when you are finished.
- 2 Open it and peel the strips.** Open the wrapper. Peel the paper strip off the sticky back, and remove the smaller strips on the wings at the sides.
- 3 Place it in your underwear.** Put the pad sticky side down along the middle of your underwear.
- 4 Fold the wings under.** Fold the wings underneath your underwear and press gently so the pad stays in place.
- 5 Bin it, then wash your hands.** When you are finished, put the used pad in the bin, and then wash your hands.

Where you can, practise calmly ahead of time, make room for sensory preferences, and keep the tone easy and matter-of-fact. There is nothing to be embarrassed about, for them or for you.

Ease the pressure

Small changes in how we talk about bodies and growing up can make a big difference to an autistic child. The aim is less pressure and more understanding, so your child can feel safe, informed and more in charge of their own body. You know your child best, so take what fits.

Instead of	Try
Hinting or using euphemisms	Clear, literal words about bodies
Springing changes on them	Giving a heads-up well before
One big talk	A series of small chats
Pushing through sensory upset	Offering sensory-friendly options
Doing it all for them, every time	Teaching one small step at a time
Expecting them to just cope	Preparing and rehearsing together
Treating privacy as optional	Respecting their growing autonomy

None of this happens in ideal conditions, and you will not always have the time, energy or support you would like. Doing what you can, on the day you can, still counts, and matters more than getting it perfect.

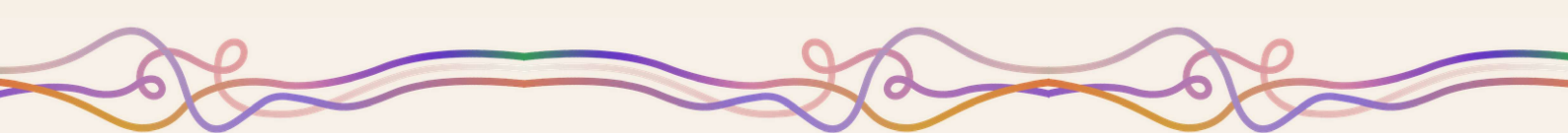
Support the changes

Explain changes clearly. Starting early, around 7 or 8, and keeping home and school consistent, can both help. Use correct names, and translate slang so they know 'boobs' means breasts. Visuals, and short, structured stories written for your child, can help too. Puberty usually starts 8 to 13 in girls and 9 to 14 in boys; signs outside that, or no periods by 16, are worth a GP visit.

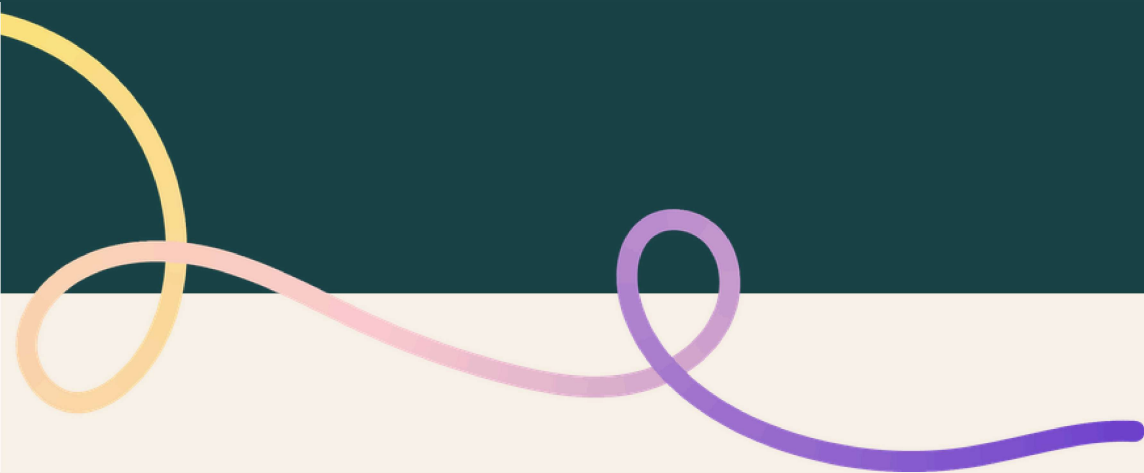
Periods and pain. Cramps are common. Heat on the tummy, comfy clothes and quiet time can help, and a GP can advise on pain relief. Pain that stops them doing everyday things is worth a GP visit.

Body safety and privacy. Private parts are what underwear or swimwear covers. An adult only helps there for hygiene (a carer) or health (a doctor, with a parent present). No one should ask a child to keep a secret about touching, and adults look after their own private parts, never needing a child's help. If something feels wrong, they can say no, move away, and keep telling a trusted adult until someone helps.

When to reach out for help. Big feelings can be hormonal, but watch for lasting low mood, feeling worthless, or losing interest, especially past two weeks. See a GP. If your child mentions self-harm or not wanting to be alive, get help that day: Lifeline 13 11 14 (or text 0477 13 11 14), Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800, or 000.



Understanding Zoe



Understanding Zoe is the first neuroaffirming AI-powered app that turns every report, observation and moment into an actionable next step, supporting neurodivergent people and those who care about them to thrive.

for more information, you can contact
hello@understandingzoe.com

Copyright 2026