

Erections, ejaculation and wet dreams



When you have an erection, blood flows into your penis and your penis gets bigger and harder and stands erect. You can have an erection at any time in your life (including when you're a baby) but you start having erections more frequently during puberty. Ejaculation is when a sticky fluid called semen is emitted from your erect penis (this is called having an orgasm and happens when you are sexually aroused). Semen (or seminal fluid) is the male reproductive fluid containing the sperm that can fertilise a woman's egg following sexual intercourse, which in turn leads to the female becoming pregnant. A wet dream is when a boy or girl has an orgasm or emits seminal or vaginal fluid while they are asleep. Wet dreams are common during puberty for both boys and girls. You may wake up with sticky pyjamas or sheets because while you were asleep you had an orgasm (you may have been dreaming about sex when this happened).



Boys may feel embarrassed or self-conscious to find that they are having more erections than before, or spontaneous erections that occur when they are not sexually aroused. Some Autistic boys may find the sensation of being sexually aroused intense or even distressing, while others may notice the sensation barely or not at all.



Autistic people may not be included in education or discussions about puberty that their peers are offered. Language associated with sexual organs and activities can vary considerably between contexts. Working out what words mean and which ones to use with your peers and which to use in a biology lesson can be a source of anxiety. Using the wrong word in the wrong context may have repercussions, for example being teased by your peers or being told off by your teacher.



Having erections and having wet dreams is natural and okay. To make things easier for your child and to reduce embarrassment, it is a good idea to provide opportunities to discuss these experiences openly, when you and your child are regulated and relaxed. Visual aids may be a useful addition to the conversation. It can also help to incorporate routines for managing hygiene - for example, regularly changing bedding and asking your child to put their pyjamas in the laundry basket if they need to.