

Friends

Chances are, friends are a very important part of your life. Some of them may even remain close to you throughout adulthood. Since you will spend much of your time with friends, it is critical that you choose them wisely. Be sure to select friends who share similar goals, values, and beliefs because they will be the ones who will support you and advise you throughout your life experiences. The less likely your friends are to get into trouble, the less likely you will be exposed to temptations that may cause you harm.

Your Health & Happiness

Because you are now considered an adult, life now begins to become more complicated, and you should expect to experience more challenges and difficulties as you grow older. How you deal with these difficulties will ultimately determine your happiness during this stage as well as the rest of your life.

Some people choose to deal with their troubles by manipulating their brains with substances to make them feel happy, such as drugs and alcohol. Other girls will choose to have boyfriends in order to feel good about themselves. There are many more options to choose from, and for some people they may work. However, they are not always the healthiest ways, especially because they can be more harmful than helpful. Drugs, dating, and drinking are some of the very few things which Allah has prohibited us from doing, and we should trust that He has designated them as *haram* for a good reason.

Although it may be hard to avoid doing the haram things that you are tempted with by your peers, just remember that there are so many fun and healthy things that you can do that are beneficial for you as well. Examples are spending time with friends, playing sports, working toward personal goals, reading, writing, and anything else that you can think of.

By trying your best to be healthy, and confident about who you are and the life that you have chosen for yourself as a Muslim, you will find Allah always with you, and your reward will be happiness throughout your lifetime, insha'Allah (God willing).

Muslim Women's League

Adolescence: Moving Toward Adulthood



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For Girls

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The New You

Think back to what you were like one year ago. Have you changed much since then? Chances are that if you have begun experiencing puberty, you will have changed greatly. The word puberty is used to describe the period of biological events that allows your body to mature and grow into an adult. Once puberty begins, you are considered an adolescent.

In Islam, being an adolescent and having your first menstrual period marks your official entrance into adulthood— a responsibility that most teens in the United States don't receive until they turn eighteen. This means that as an adolescent, not only must others begin treating you as an adult, but you are expected to act in a more mature manner. Knowing that you are now capable of being more responsible, you also become accountable to Allah for all your deeds— good or bad.

There are several responsibilities that every adolescent Muslim should be aware of. You are expected to demonstrate proper Islamic conduct, be good to your parents, pray on time, fast during Ramadan, and dress modestly in accordance to the Islamic dress code when in the presence of boys and men who are not directly related to you. It may sound like a tremendous responsibility, but if Allah did not think that you could handle it, He would not have made it a duty for young adults.

While your adolescent years can be full of fun and exciting experiences, they can also be very challenging. You are forced to deal with several changes within yourself and in your relationship with others. This brochure will give you some tips on what to expect and how to deal with this unique period of your life.

Dealing With Change

Your Body

The most obvious changes that take place in your body are the development of breasts, hair growth in the underarms and pubic area, and the onset of menstruation. Other changes such as weight gain and broadening of the hips may be a bit discouraging to you, but these too, are natural changes that a healthy, maturing female will experience.

Within your body, there are several other changes that take place, which you may not even be aware of. Hormone levels increase, and your reproductive organs grow and mature. Because many girls fear gaining weight, they decide to diet and eat very small amounts of food. Others may eat large amounts of junk food. Both extremes are harmful to your health and can affect the development of your body in negative ways. It is important to accept the changes that you see in your body and that you be sure to eat healthy, well balanced meals. **Eating healthy food will not make you fat.**

Many adolescent girls feel very self-conscious of their stage of development in comparison to their friends. Whether you are the last of your friends to reach puberty or you are the first, you probably feel embarrassed and wish you were no different from the others. It may help to remember that this stage is only temporary, and the way you look now is not how you will look for the rest of your life.

Your Self

Adolescence is the time in your life in which you begin to establish your own identity. You may start choosing your friends more carefully. Perhaps you will find yourself spending more time thinking about how you should dress, act, and even speak. Believe it or not, the people around you greatly influence your decision on the type of person you wish to become. Some girls choose to imitate their friends and peers, and they end up being very similar to them. Others may rebel against those around them and become the opposite of what people are telling them to be.

Regardless of the influence that you receive from others it is important to remember to be yourself and to do what would please Allah.

Dealing With Others

Family

Because you have most likely spent your entire life with them, the members of your family know you better than anyone else. By sharing your thoughts and experiences with them at this stage in your life, you would be amazed at the wonderful advice that they could give you based on knowing your personality and having been through similar situations themselves. Do not feel discouraged from sharing your ideas with your family, especially if you find them asking you more and more questions. They are only trying to let you know that they care about you and would like to remain an important part of your life.

While opening up with your parents is an essential key to surviving adolescence, it is also necessary for you to have some privacy at home. You should be free to spend some time alone, and you may speak and share secrets with your female friends in private. As long as you stay within the limits set by Islam, your parents should not infringe upon your privacy.