PEACE

Pathway for eating disorders and autism developed from clinical experience

NHS

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Teenage years are a hugely important time **for growth and development**. There are so many changes and some of these continue until you are **25 years old** (especially the ones to do with your brain!)

Going through puberty, and the hormonal changes this brings, is really important. This helps with **building good bone health** (peak bone density has to be acquired during the teen years to last you the rest of your life) but those hormonal changes are needed for **muscles, tendons, liver, brain** and almost every organ in your body.

HEIGHT GROWTH

Generally, by late teens most of your growth in height should have taken place but sometimes when young people are underweight for a very long time, they may have catch up growth later than their peer group.

During our teen years our **requirements for growth are high**. Girls do most of their growing between the ages of 11 and 14; boys do most of their growing between the ages of 13 and 16, but it can happen earlier or later too. Growing in weight and height does not always happen at the same time, and it **is normal to gain some weight** to store energy for growth in height.

It is also quite normal to feel extremely hungry before and during a growth spurt. For some young people it is hard to feel like you have less control over your body but keep reminding yourself that everybody (and everyone's body) is **unique**, and **we all grow and develop differently**. Having good nutrition helps to fuel the growth and development of the body in puberty. Weight increases each year with development, **especially during puberty**. On average, girls have a weight increase of 41% over 2 years, and boys have a 39% increase (Rogol, Roemmich , & Clark, 2002).

FUEL IS IMPORTANT!

To perform at your best, **socially** with friends, **emotionally** (your mood and anxiety) and **educationally** in school, you need to be able to fuel growth, development, and normal hormonal functioning.

BODIES NEED ENERGY

In a starvation state, your body is digesting all your vital organs for energy and shutting down as many processes as possible to keep you alive. Once you start eating again, your body then must grow back these vital organs, and **this takes energy** – it's tough work to grow new muscle cells and all the organs in your body. This means that you need **more food than any of your friends** and even when you're in a healthy weight range.

We know that it can be sometimes be really difficult to talk about eating difficulties. Try to find an adult that you trust and remember that they are there to help and not judge.

References

Rogol, A. D., Roemmich , J. N., & Clark, P. A. (2002). Growth at puberty. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 31*(6), 192-200.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The QR code will take you to the PEACE website where you can find further information, resources and support.