



Health Care

Medical Conditions Related to FASD



Precocious Puberty

What?

Puberty is the time during development when sexual and physical characteristics mature. Typically, this maturity occurs between ages 10 and 14 for girls, and between ages 12 and 16 for boys. Precocious puberty causes these changes begin at an earlier age than normal. One cause of precocious puberty is changes in the brain and hormones due to prenatal alcohol exposure. Precocious puberty occurs in some children with an FASD.

How does this affect a child?

Bone growth and height growth stop after puberty ends. With precocious puberty, this growth stops earlier than normal and children are not able to reach their full height potential. Precocious puberty can also cause emotional and social difficulties. Children with this condition might be teased or feel confused and embarrassed about being more well developed than their classmates. Girls can become more emotional, moody, or irritable, and boys can develop an inappropriate sex drive for their age. Social and emotional immaturity paired with early sexual development can result in greater vulnerability for the child being sexually abused or sexually inappropriate.

Treatment Options

If you suspect your child is showing signs of early puberty, consult your pediatrician or an endocrinologist for a diagnosis and discuss the treatment options available. One option for treating precocious puberty is to lower the levels of sex hormones by using medication in order to stop sexual development from progressing.

Resources

For more information, consult your pediatrician and visit the Kids Health [website](#) and the PubMed Health [website](#).

"To this date, our daughter is very petite, 75lbs. and 4'10" tall. She began puberty at age 11 and now at age 16 they say she is done growing. She does get teased about how little she is sometimes. Our son is now just 9 years old, but I'm beginning to see signs of puberty...armpit hair and body odor, which are becoming issues. He seems too young to have 'the talk,' but I guess I better get some books to help explain things, and I am going to make an appointment with his doctor for more advice."

-Heather, parent

