

## Stages of Growth

There are six different stages that humans go through as they grow older. These are: baby, toddler, child, teenager, adult and senior/elderly.



## Gestation Periods

**Gestation** is the prenatal stage or the time between fertilisation and birth. The gestation period is different between mammal species. Some take only a matter of weeks to give birth, whereas others have to wait months.

In the current animal world, the longest gestation period belongs to elephants, where it can last as long as 22 months. On the other hand, the opossum is the shortest at only 12 days. Dogs have a gestation period, on average, of 61 days, with cats an average of 64. However, these figures depend heavily on the breed and size of the animal in question.

## Key Vocabulary



**CHANGE:** When something becomes different.



**DEVELOP:** To grow or change over a period of time and usually become more advanced.



**FERTILISATION:** The process of the male and female sex cells fusing together.



**FOETUS:** An animal or human in its later stages of development before it is born.



**GESTATION:** The process or time in which babies grow inside their mother's body before they are born.



**INVERTEBRATE:** A creature that does not have a spine.



**PUBERTY:** The physical stage of development between childhood and adulthood.



**VERTEBRATE:** A creature that has a spine.



**WOMB:** The part inside a woman's body where a baby grows before it is born.

## How do we Develop in the Womb?

In order to create a baby, two parents are needed (a male and a female). A male sex cell (sperm) fertilises the female sex cell (egg). This begins the growth of the **foetus**. When the baby is born, it will have DNA from both parents so will have characteristics of both. This is called **fertilisation** or **conception**.

Women have a special organ called the womb. This is where the fertilised egg will begin to develop and grow. The womb protects the foetus whilst it is growing as well as protecting the woman's other internal organs. A special cord connects the foetus by an opening on its stomach to the mother. This is called the umbilical cord. It provides oxygen and nutrients to help the foetus grow and develop. It takes 40 weeks for the foetus to fully develop in the womb. When it is fully developed, it is ready to be born!



## Puberty

When you are a teenager, you go through puberty. Puberty is the process of a child's body maturing into an adult body. Lots of changes happen during puberty. Some are specific changes for girls and some for boys, but the general changes that affect everyone are:

**Smell:** Sweating is normal and everyone does it. But when you reach puberty, you may sweat more. When your sweat mixes with bacteria on your skin it can smell. We call this B.O. (body odour).

**Spots:** Due to the changes happening inside your body during puberty, it's normal to have spots. Spots can appear on your face, neck, chest and back.

**Hair:** During puberty, hair begins to grow in new places, such as under your arms. Boys will also begin to grow hair on their face and their chest. Boys and girls both grow hair but boys tend to grow more.

**Mood:** Hormones in our bodies can affect our mood. We may feel angry, sad or lack confidence in ourselves. This is normal too but if you ever do feel emotional, please make sure you talk to a trusted adult or friend.

