

# Sex Education of Children and Adolescents

## 3.1 The proper age for sex education

The question in everyone's mind is that at what age sex information should be given to children. The correct approach is that whenever, like in the case of other information, the child wants to know about some aspect of this subject, tell him only as much as he has asked. For sex education nobody can be a better guide than parents. When parents become guides and friends, a child will not be afraid of asking the question he/she has in the mind. A child starts asking questions as soon as he starts talking and those include questions related to the sexual parts of the body.

People do not want to talk to their children, especially girls, about such matters but what will happen if they are involved in some dangerous situation due to ignorance and then they will have to suffer the consequences.

Sexual matters may be touched upon directly but the tone and content of dialogue should not express extra-ordinary interest or passion and the child should not feel as if some dark secret is being divulged.

## 3.2 Sex education of your own children

During adolescence boys and girls usually gain information about sexual matters, not from their parents and teachers but from other sources. Not from doctors or medical specialists either but from their friends and acquaintances, who are equally ignorant in such matters; or from books and magazines that are usually substandard and devoid of not



only correct medical and psychological information but also of the teachings of the Quran, Hadees and Sharia. The result is that because of the shyness of parents and teachers, correct medical and religious information regarding sexual matters, either does not reach the young children at all or at least is not comprehensive. In this way our youth remain ignorant of medical and religious information and become victims of several false beliefs and worries regarding these matters. As a consequence they show less interest in their education and daily work, presume that they are sexually inadequate and often become sad and depressed. Some of them are trapped by quacks, which enhance their worries under the guise of treatment. Parents keep observing helplessly and are themselves engulfed in misgivings and many a times resort to criticism and punishment but nothing works. It is better to consult some qualified doctor; however sadly, many doctors too do not encourage such discussions.

What can the parents do to protect their children from these worries? The answer to this is that they should first of all try to gain correct information themselves and then transfer it to their children. The question is how to talk to young boys and girls on such a sensitive matter? Natural embarrassment will definitely complicate the situation!

The solution to this problem is to talk about these matters from the very childhood. When the child starts to talk and understand, like other parts of body, he should be told the names of the excretory organs, actual names not fictitious ones. After all these acts are very natural and so must not be considered shameful. Then the function of the organs involved should be told correctly too; for example they can be told that the anus is for passing stools and the organ for passing urine is called penis. If the child touches his organ there is no need to be furious but after the age of three years it should be explained that people do not consider this act proper, therefore doing so in the presence of others should be



avoided, just as we avoid urinating and passing stools before others. In the same way it should be impressed upon the child that running around naked is not considered proper either.

Children have a strong wish to see the genitals of their parents. This wish of small children should be fulfilled but in a casual manner, for example allowing them to remain in the room while changing clothes or allowing them to remain while taking a bath or using the latrine. This way they will come to know the difference between male and female bodies, as both the father and the mother should participate in this process. They can be told that the organ of urination in women is different from that in men as they have only an orifice instead of a penis, and it is called “vulva”.

When the boy or girl is four to five years old the change of menstruation pads should also be allowed to be seen and it should be explained that once every month some blood comes out of the organ of urination (Vulva/Vagina) in women. They should be asked not to talk about these matters in the presence of others because people do not consider such talk proper. If the mother is pregnant and the abdomen is bulging, a child three years of age or older, should be told that she has a child inside her abdomen and it will come out after nine months. After the child is born they should be informed that it has come out of the mother’s abdomen after nine months.

At the age of six to seven years the importance of marriage can be explained and that children are born only after marriage. At the age of eight or nine years, when they ask for further information, it can be explained that when husband and wife sleep together, the child is formed in the abdomen. At the age of ten to eleven years when he demands further information, it can be explained that sperms come out of the penis of the man and enter the vagina of the wife, inside



which is an egg (or ovum). The union of sperm and egg forms the child. Pictures of sperm and egg should also be shown.

The boys at this age should also be informed about nocturnal seminal emissions, that sperms are formed in the testis and they come out of the penis in the form of a thick white fluid, usually during sleep but some times trickle out in drops even while awake.

Children at this age should be told about the growth of breasts in girls. The growth of pubic hair should also be mentioned and along with it the fact that according to the principles of Islam at least once every two weeks these hair should be removed. The details of the procedure of removal of the hair should also be explained, for example by using (leg) shaving machines and safety blades in boys and hair removing powder or creams in girls. About the breasts it can be further explained that after childbirth they secrete milk which the child can suck and get nutrition for growth until he starts eating himself.

When the adolescents at the age of thirteen to fourteen years ask, the actual act of intercourse can be explained; that the penis of the husband becomes stiff and enters the vagina of the wife, like a foot enters a sock or the fingers enter a glove. This act is very pleasurable for the man and the wife; also in this way the sperm of the husband is transferred into the wife and later grows to become a child. The Islamic aspect of this act must be explained at the same time, that this act between man and wife is very pleasurable, causes birth of children and on top of that one gets reward in heaven equal to prayers (نفل) but indulging in this act without marriage is a great sin, which is known as adultery (زنا). If a married person commits adultery it is punishable by death and that too by stoning and the punishment for an unmarried person is eighty lashes.

Important information to convey to adolescents is the age at which they will be considered adults and start complying with the responsibilities of an adult Muslim. It can be explained



that when boys and girls reach puberty or adolescence they should start their obligatory prayers and other responsibilities like fasting, compulsory charity (زكاة), a pilgrimage to Mecca (حج) and the struggle for a just and honest government in the country.

The signs of puberty for boys are hair on the face, under arms or pubic area and the discharge of semen from the penis, especially at night (nocturnal ejaculation)

The signs of puberty for girls are the start of the periods (menstruation), and the budding of breasts.

Now-a-days adolescents should also be informed about the sexually transmitted diseases like Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) which results in a horrible death. In the same manner inform about the damages of other sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis and gonorrhoea. Also that adultery besides being a great sin is also the cause of these illnesses. The religious importance of bathing after nocturnal ejaculation, sexual intercourse and menstruation should be stated.

The method of cleaning the semen from the body or clothes should also be explained i.e. it is not a severe pollution; as a matter of fact it is not considered, by most Scholars, as pollution at all and by others as only very mild in nature for which rinsing with a few drops of water or scraping away if dry, is all that is necessary.

Discussion about masturbation is necessary and they should be told that it does not cause any sexual or physical disorder and that Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal \* does not consider it a sin. However other Imams declare it a sin, but Imam Abu Hanifa says that during intense pressure and to avoid “adultery” if one indulges in this practice it is hoped that Allah will forgive.



Young people, fifteen to sixteen years of age, should also be told about other aspects of relations between man and wife i.e. their rights and obligations. After the age of ten to twelve years they should also be provided with good books on these subjects. First of all they should be taught the information on these subjects present in the Quran and Hadees. Good books on sexual relations between man and wife should be provided. Such books should be brought home and the children should be encouraged to read them.

### **3.3 The importance of sex education.**

Glamorous though love and romance may be but it is still an off shoot of the basic instinct of sex.

Our society has pushed our youngsters into the acquisition of wrong and absurd information on sex. Thus when they experience sexual stimulation for the first time, they feel confused and guilty, because they have not been prepared for this.

It is the prime duty of all legislators, parents, teachers and social scientists to encourage sex education. To understand human nature one must understand sex. One must remember that truth and honesty about sex has never bred immorality, rather it is due to the flouting of the rules of Islam about modesty and the mixing of the sexes. Sex ensures perpetuity of life in this world. Sex is considered worship in Islam. It is necessary to get correct information of sexual matters if one wants to develop finesse and propriety, save oneself from sexual problems, and avoid a life of sin and disease.

Sex glands secrete specific hormones, which cause masculinity in men and feminine characteristics in women. These are the magical secretions which affect bone, muscle, nerve and every other organ of the body.



Every body knows that, at the time of first menses, the girls who have not been informed before hand become extremely anxious. Due to ignorance and distorted ideas about sexual intercourse many brides tremble with fear on their wedding night. Some times boys who have no abnormality become excited sexually and this excitement leads to seminal ejaculation. The mental tension evoked by this first premature ejaculation, in ignorant youth, is very great. In the animal world, contrary to the humans, the male is more attractive. The females are attracted not only by the physical beauty of the male, but also by its strength and power, which is certainly more than the female as in the humans. In deer it has been observed that when bucks have an encounter, the doe always goes to the winner to appreciate its bravery. Every male is superior to the female in size. The male's sexual prowess is also so great that a cock suffices for eight hens, and a buck or a male gorilla for a whole herd of females.

In school and college we often teach exactly the same subjects to our boys and girls although they will be performing quite different roles in adult life. Being a wife and a mother is something reserved only for girls. The wish for a child, in every young girl, is in total accordence with her biological function. The girl finds a partner and gets busy reproducing. No knowledgeable person has ever denied the fact that the biological function of motherhood is very different from fatherhood. Therefore whatever else the girl may be taught, it should be ensured that she is an expert on home making and child rearing and has some knowledge on related subjects such as education, medicine and psychology. The relationship of the husband and wife is complementary and so each supplies the other with sustenance, love and affection.

Sex plays a great part in determining our actions, emotions and mental working. It is due to the sex instinct that marriages take place, families are formed, children are born and raised and men provide material and physical sustenance



for the women and children in the warm loving atmosphere of the home.

Sex is the driving force of life and makes the world attractive, as has been said aptly “its love which makes the world go round.”

Of all the organisms found in the universe, the human body is the most complicated. It comprises of two parts, body and mind. We start from scratch and if we complete the age stipulated for us by nature then we pass through stages of neonate, childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and old age.

When a person is either physically, mentally or emotionally retarded life is not easy or happy. This process starts during the childhood training. If children are not raised in a happy, confident way then psychological problems and mental illness can result. Thus we should let our children know that sex is not bad. God Almighty has also designated sex between man and wife equal to prayers, even their talking to each other is considered an act of worship.

If this point of view about sex education is accepted then the question arises as to its method, when to give it, who should give it, what to tell and what not to tell and the choice of words in which to reveal the whole story. Usually children initiate the process of enquiry. They may ask how they were born.

Why not satisfy your child’s thirst for information by answering this question and others with simple and truthful answering.

**Questions about sex in the minds of youngsters, parents and teachers (a) below five years:**

**(I) Questions asked by children:**

How are children born?

Why men can’t bear children?





Why grown-up people have hair on their bodies?

Why the breasts in women are protruding?

**(ii) Questions asked by parents and teachers:**

How should sex education be initiated?

Can unfavorable childhood circumstances cause permanent damage?

Why do children try to put everything in their mouth?

When do children stop sucking objects?

Is masturbation dangerous?

When does sexual curiosity start?

What is the necessary information for toilet training?

How to explain about the different body parts and their functions?

Is providing information about masturbation to children appropriate?

What role has the father to play in sexual training?

How can I talk about sex naturally?

What materials should I have, to help me talk to children about sex?

**(b) Five to eight years:**

**(i) Questions asked by the children.**

How does the child enter the mother's abdomen?

How do the father's sperm and the mother's ovum get together?

How does the child breathe inside the mother's abdomen?

Why does the mother's abdomen become so distended during pregnancy?



What size is a child at the time of birth?

**(ii) Questions asked by parents and teachers:**

What does the child want to learn at this age?

What information would be considered superfluous?

Is embarrassment a natural condition?

Does sexual information cause sexual stimulation?

Is it proper to allow children of this age to sleep in your own bed or bed room?

If children play with their own sex organs what should be done?

How should the father and mother prepare for training for these ages?

**(c) Adolescence:**

**(i) Questions asked by the children:**

What is hand practice or masturbation?

Can masturbation take the form of a bad habit?

Does a woman feel pain during menstruation?

Does a woman feel the egg getting mature?

Thoughts about menstruation make me fearful. Must it happen?"

Why do boys have seminal ejaculations?

What is the shape of a sperm?

What is the shape of an ovum?

How do you come to know that a child is about to be born?

Can unmarried women have children?

**(ii) Questions asked by the parents and teachers:**

Do sexual feelings arise suddenly in adolescence?



What should we do at that time?

If boys and girls do not ask any questions at this age, what should be done?

Do the children talk to their friends about whatever they know?

Are there any books which have information on sex?

Is socializing with children of the same age group useful?

What should be done if a child starts using dirty language?

What should we do to become good parents?

### **3.4 Sexual Intercourse**

In men the elongated organ used for intercourse (and urination) is known as “penis.” It is normally soft and shrunken but when the man becomes sexually excited it gets filled with blood and becomes hard and relatively elongated. When man and wife have intercourse, the husband holds his organ and inserts it into the wife’s vagina. In the beginning some oil or other suitable lubricating fluid or cream should be used while doing so, but after some time the sexual organs of males and females secrete sufficient lubricating fluid so that extra lubrication is usually not needed. After this the man moves his organ in and out of the female vagina. This act is usually pleasurable for both, however for the first few months; the wife feels some pain which subsides gradually. This act continues from one to several minutes. Then the pleasure of the husband reaches its climax and his movements become quicker and stronger. At that time some whitish fluid is discharged from the penis which is known as semen. With this, usually the hardness of the organ also subsides and the man’s body becomes relaxed and the act ends. During the last moments of intercourse, usually, the woman too feels intense pleasure and the movements of her body also increase. This act is known as “sexual intercourse.”



This act is necessary for child birth but now-a-days semen can be placed inside the woman with a syringe or both the sperm and egg can be removed and fertilized outside the body and this too can result in pregnancy. This method is known as artificial insemination. God Almighty has designated sexual intercourse between man and wife equal to optional prayer but if it is performed with other than spouse then it is a great sin. This is known as adultery. If adultery is committed by a married man or a married woman Islam prescribes the punishment of death and if committed by an unmarried person the punishment is a hundred lashes.

### **3.5 Pregnancy and birth**

The semen contains small organisms which are called “sperms.” Every drop of semen contains thousands of these sperms. They are capable of moving in the genital tract by means of a vibrating tail. The woman’s body contains a small gland called “ovary”, of the shape and size of a small almond. There are two of these, one on each side of the uterus. The ovary is connected to the uterus by means of a tube known as the “fallopian tube”. Usually, each one of these glands produces one egg every month, which is the size of a pin head. This eggs travels to the uterus through the tube which has small flapping hair for this purpose. At the same time the sperms also move and enter the uterus where these two fuse together. If the ovum does not reach there or if it reaches there but does not merge with the sperm, the child is not formed. If the sperm and ovum meet each other, the sperm enters the ovum and the formation of a child starts.

The ovum is released about ten to fifteen days after the cessation of menstruation and for three days retains the ability that if fertilized by a sperm, it can form a child otherwise it degenerates. Therefore if pregnancy is desired the most favorable time for intercourse is ten to fifteen days after the cessation of menstruation. If one desires to avoid pregnancy then the best time is one week before and after menstruation.



After the fertilization of the ovum by the sperm, it takes nine months for the child to get completed in the womb. During this time the mother's abdomen gradually enlarges. Then the time comes for the baby to be born. The child comes out of the mother's vagina. During delivery, at the time of birth, nature makes the tube from the uterus to the outside, as soft and flexible as to allow passage of the child through it. Strong contractions of the uterus push the baby out. The muscles of abdomen also contract powerfully and help in child birth. At the time of birth, first the head comes out, then the face becomes visible; after this, one by one the shoulders come out and then the body and legs.

When the child is born, it breathes immediately and starts crying. Inside the mother's abdomen it did not breathe. Its food reached it, in the form of mother's blood, via the umbilicus, which is a special tube with arteries and veins from the mother to the fetus. After the birth of the baby this tube is tied from both ends and then cut off in the middle, and the child is separated from the mother.

If the sperm does not fertilize the ovum, the internal layer of the uterus starts shedding, and mixed with some blood, starts coming out of the uterus via the vagina and vulva. This is known as "menstruation." In women who are not pregnant this blood flows every month. This monthly flow starts at the age of ten to eleven years and continues to the age of fifty to fifty five years and then stops. This flow is for four to five days and is scanty. If the period is prolonged or the flow is copious, a doctor should be consulted. During this period there is slight pain in the abdomen as well as the whole body. If pain is excessive it needs treatment.

### **VERSES OF THE HOLY QURAN**

1. "Only HE knows what is growing inside the abdomen of mothers." (Surah Luqman, Ayat 34)



2. “HE created you from a single body, then HE created a pair for you from the body and HE created for you males and females from your cattle. HE keeps on changing you from one form to another, inside the three dark layers of your mother’s abdomen”.

3. “HE is the one who created you from clay, then from the sperm, then from a blood clot, and then HE brings you out in the form of a child. Then HE lets you grow so that you reach your prime and he lets you become old and some of you are called back earlier. All this is done as you complete your stipulated time; so understand the reality.

4. “HE created earth and heaven and made your body and made it very well. Finally you have to return to HIM.

### **3.6 Nocturnal Ejaculation**

With the onset of adolescence, along with the physical and emotional changes, the sex organs also develop for their assigned purpose. Preparation of semen in the glands, growth of sex organs, sexual feelings, and attraction of the opposite sex all cause sexual stimulation. Semen produced in the glands, which cannot be accumulated indefinitely in the seminal vesicles (two small sacs, one on each side) is discharged from the penis from time to time. When this discharge occurs due to the over flowing of semen from the vesicles during sleep, it is known as “nocturnal ejaculation.”

In an average young man nocturnal ejaculation occurs about once a month, but even if it occurs more or less than this one should not be unduly concerned. Youngsters worry needlessly about the discharge of semen via nocturnal ejaculations and otherwise. They think it is damaging to physical and sexual health. They have a pre-conceived idea of its frequency and if this exceeds that number they feel their physical and sexual health has been compromised. Due to such entrenched ideas even a single nocturnal ejaculation can



occasionally produce, psychological symptoms like weakness, headache and dizziness.

### **3.7 Circumcision**

The Quran and other revelations inform us that the first two persons to be circumcised were the prophet Abraham (1) and his son prophet Ismael (1). Their followers practiced this after them. The prophet Mohammad (1) also taught Muslims to adopt this practice.

Circumcision has many health benefits. Collection of viscous material in the space between the glans and the prepuce known as smegma, even in persons who are habitually clean, is a well known fact. Its presence gives rise to several diseases including cancer. Sometimes this hood like skin is so constricted that at the time of erection it does not retract from the glans easily and this results in pain during erection and at times intercourse becomes impossible. Considering these facts, circumcision is quite beneficial. It reduces the chances of penile cancer, and recent research has proved that there is a 50% reduction in the spread of AIDS, equal in effectiveness to the vaccine that has been developed. For a long time, European and American countries and people of other religions had been criticizing Muslims (and Jews) for this act of circumcision, calling it barbaric but after realizing the benefits of circumcision now hardly any child born in a hospital in these countries goes home without circumcision.

### **3.8 Production of Semen**

There are many misconceptions about semen and its discharge from the body. Most adolescents consider its discharge harmful for health, physical as well as sexual, whether the discharge is due to intercourse, masturbation, or nocturnal ejaculation. Even the simple oozing of the clear



whitish fluid, which is usually from the prostate and is due to sexual excitement, is considered dangerous. Quacks propagate, and youngsters accept, these concepts. There is practically no one to counter this misinformation. Teachers and parents are too shy and the press firmly refuses to print any sex education article. Some quack hakims say that discharge of semen, even in intercourse, is so dangerous for health that it is better to avoid intercourse altogether; if that is not possible then not more than once a year!

Others put forward the ridiculous formula that eighty drops of milk form one drop of ghee (heated butter), eighty drops of ghee form one drop of blood and eighty drops of blood form one drop of semen. All the above has no scientific basis at all. Discharge of semen is as natural as discharge of urine, when the bladder (seminal vesicle in case of semen) gets full and there is no further capacity to store it. It is as harmless as spitting saliva, which one can do a hundred times a day, without any injurious effect on one's health whatsoever.

Actually semen is formed by the secretion of the sexual glands. Its production starts after adolescence and may continue even in old age. Of these glands a pair, known as testes, produce sperm. Another pair, which is called seminal vesicles, secretes a milky fluid. Sperms, which are being produced continuously, in millions, reach the seminal vesicles through special tubes called "vas deferens" and are stored there safely. The third gland which is known as the prostate secretes a thin fluid, resembling saliva, which is called the prostatic fluid. Intense sexual stimulation, whatever its nature, causes ejaculation of semen from the seminal vesicles through the urethra.

### **3.9 Urinary bladder**

The urinary bladder is a sac which stores urine produced by the kidneys till such time that it is voided. The urine passes from the bladder to the urethra and is voided through the





external urethral meatus. Thus semen and urine share the urethra and urethral meatus in their journey to the outside world.

Although the urinary bladder lies in close proximity to the internal sexual organs, and semen and urine share the urethra and the urethral meatus in their ejection, yet the bladder and the urinary system are not involved in any sexual act, or in any sexual problem or disease.

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*(1) May Allah bless with eternal peace*

*\*See Tafheemul Quran by Moulana Moudoodi: Volume # 3, Pages 225-226*



## *Dedication*

*For those who know not or mis-care and are dragged into deep darkness and depression,*

*For those who toil to know, still in process of exploration, the hidden aspects of human behaviors and mysteries of creation- for enlightenment of self, humanity and life.*

