

This leaflet was created by the SPEG Nurses' Sub-Group. SPEG NMCN is a network of health-care professionals in Scotland who have a particular interest in the care of children and young adults who have endocrine conditions.

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If you require an alternative format please contact [NSS.EqualityDiversity@nhs.scot](mailto:NSS.EqualityDiversity@nhs.scot)

Telephone 0131 275 6000

BSL Contact Scotland BSL  
[Contact Scotland \(contactscotland-bsl.org\)](http://contactscotland-bsl.org)

### For more information, contact:

Scottish Paediatric Endocrine Group (SPEG)  
Network  
National Network Management Service  
Email: [NSS.speg@nhs.scot](mailto:NSS.speg@nhs.scot)



[www.speg.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.speg.scot.nhs.uk)

## Parent information booklet

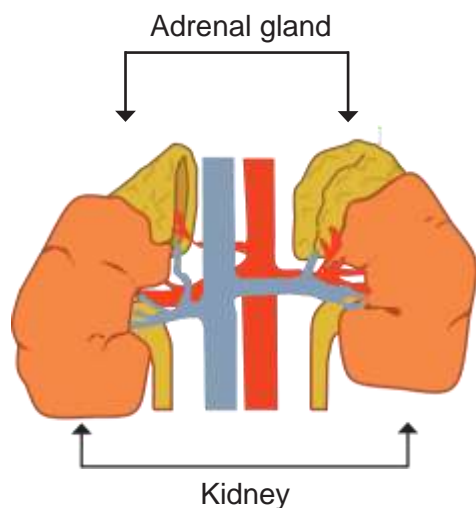
# Adrenarche



## Premature or exaggerated adrenarche

It is helpful to think of puberty and adrenarche as separate processes that your child's body goes through, usually at the same time, but not always. Adrenarche (see below for an explanation) can happen a few years before puberty. In some children this is more obvious. This leaflet will help explain what is happening.

The early signs of development that you have noticed in your child are due to the adrenal glands producing hormones.



The adrenal glands, which lie just above the kidneys, start to produce hormones known as androgens in both boys and girls from the age of around six, and the levels of these androgens gradually rise.

Some children are more sensitive to these hormones and when the levels are high enough this can cause some or all of the following signs. When the child is under eight this is known as premature adrenarche.

- Development of pubic hair
- Development of underarm hair
- Greasy skin or hair, and spots
- Underarm sweating with body odour
- Mood changes
- Slight increase in growth rate

While the signs and symptoms of adrenarche may cause alarm or embarrassment when they happen at a young age, there are no ill effects associated with this condition and your child will not need any treatment.

A blood test or urine sample may be done to check your child's androgen levels and they may have an x-ray of their hand and wrist to look at the age of their bones. These tests will help to confirm that there are no other concerns.

Your child is not in true puberty and it is unlikely that they will start puberty unusually early.

## Some frequently asked questions

- **Can my child use a deodorant?**  
Yes.
- **How should we treat greasy skin?**  
It is safe to use facial washes.  
Encourage a healthy diet.
- **Can my child shave or use hair-removal creams?**  
Yes if you feel this is necessary.
- **How do we treat spots?**  
If the spots are troublesome your GP can prescribe some ointment or cream.
- **Are there any books that might help?**  
Hair in Funny Places by Babette Cole.