

# Changing Times

By Shaleek Wilson



**Dr. Christina Reh**  
CHOC Endocrinologist

**Dr. Reh** completed her pediatric internship and residency at Children's Hospital of Orange County and her endocrinology fellowship at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. She is a member of numerous groups, including the Endocrine Society and the Pediatric Endocrine Society.

Dr. Reh's philosophy of care: "I approach patient care as if each child is potentially my family, letting parents know what the options are for treatment, or no treatment and incorporating what they want."

**EDUCATION:**  
Loma Linda University School of Medicine

**BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:**  
Pediatrics and Pediatric Endocrinology

## SPROUTING, CHANGING, GROWING

Voice changes. Acne. Raging hormones. At some point, every little boy and girl grows up and into adulthood. The stage of life when this is most present is puberty. What's the best way to explain what your child is going through? Less is usually best. "Normally, if kids ask questions, they don't need detailed answers," says Dr. Reh. "Answer just the question they ask. Keep it very simple; tell them it's a normal process." Parents should also be prepared to answer questions, again in simple terms, about what's happening with the opposite sex.

## FOR GIRLS ONLY

The first signs of puberty are either breast buds or hair growth in the private area, says Dr. Reh. In addition, girls will experience a buildup of fat in the breasts and around the hips, then the arms, legs, hands and feet will also grow taller early in puberty. "Later, around stage four of puberty, menstruation will begin," says Dr. Reh.



## FOR BOYS ONLY

"For boys, the earliest beginning signs of puberty should not start before age nine and they can be as late as ages 13 to 14," says Dr. Reh. "The first sign for boys is actually testicular enlargement." As time goes on, boys will begin to experience increased body hair and their voices will crack and become deeper. The growth spurt for boys is in the later stages of puberty.

## LATE BLOOMER?

Some children will experience delayed puberty. "It's actually the most common reason for being shorter than your friends," says Dr. Reh. "And it tends to be a benign [non-threatening] process." If you have concerns about early or late puberty development, talk to your child's pediatrician.



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## 8 to 13

AGES WHEN PUBERTY  
GENERALLY STARTS  
FOR GIRLS

## 10 to 16

AGES WHEN BOYS  
EXPERIENCE A  
GROWTH SPURT



## 50

PERCENTAGE  
OF BOYS THAT  
DEVELOP  
TEMPORARY  
BREAST TISSUE  
DURING  
PUBERTY

