

Bras, Boys & Beauty



Dear Girl,

Hey, you! Yes, you - the one holding this book right now. Welcome. This book was made just for you.

Maybe you picked it up because something is already changing in your body and you have questions. Maybe someone gave it to you and you are not sure what it is about. Maybe you are feeling a little shy even opening it - that is okay too!

Growing up is one of the most exciting, confusing, beautiful, and sometimes scary things that will ever happen to you. Your body will change. Your feelings will get bigger. Your world will start to look different.

And the good news? EVERY girl goes through it.
The girl who plays ampe in your compound. The girl
who tops her class. The girl in the big city. The girl in
the village.
Every. Single. One.

You are not alone. You are not broken. You are growing - and growing is a good thing.

So read slowly. Ask questions. Talk to your mum, aunty, older sister, or teacher about what you read.

With so much love,
Your Big Sis 



SECTION ONE

B-R-A-S

Your body growing is not something to be afraid of.
It is beautiful, God-designed science - and it is happening right on time.

What Is Puberty?

Have you ever watched a mango tree? When young, it is just a small seedling - no fruit, no big branches. But slowly, as the seasons pass, it grows. Branches spread. Leaves multiply. Then one day, mangoes appear!

Your body works a little like that mango tree. You were born as a small baby, grew into a child - and now your body is beginning its next big season of growing. We call this season **PUBERTY**.

☺ WHAT IS PUBERTY?

Puberty is the time when your body changes from a **child's body into an adult's body**. For girls, it usually starts between ages **8 and 13** — though some girls start earlier or later. This is completely normal.



The Science Part

- ✓ **Hypothalamus**
Deep inside your brain - it acts like a signal tower. When it's time for puberty, it sends a message...
- ✓ **Pituitary Gland**
It is the size of a pea - but very powerful! Sends chemical messengers called hormones into your blood.
- ✓ **Hormones travel your body saying...**
"Time to grow!"

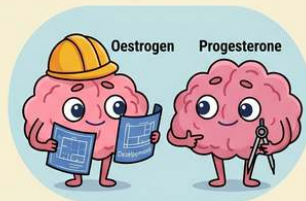
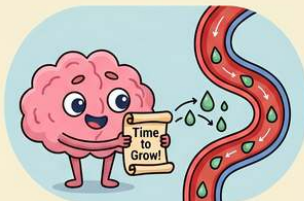
Oestrogen

EE-stroh-jen - the main female hormone responsible for most body changes

Progesterone

pro-JES-ter-one - works alongside oestrogen to guide your development

These two hormones are responsible for **all the changes you will notice** in your body during puberty.



When Does Puberty Start?

Puberty does not start at the same time for every girl. Think about it: if you plant three mango seeds on the same day, they will not all grow at exactly the same speed - but they all grow into mango trees.

Ages 8–9

Early starters

Ages 10–12

Most girls

Ages 13–14

Late starters

All of this is completely normal! ✓

Real Questions, Real Answers



Q: I'm 10 and my friends already have breasts. I don't have any. Is something wrong with me?

Nothing at all! Girls start puberty at different times. Your body is working on its own schedule. Your turn is coming - give yourself grace and time.

Q: I started growing before all my friends and I feel embarrassed. Why am I so different?

Starting early is just as normal as starting later. Some girls begin as young as age 8. It can feel lonely to be first - but you are not strange, just on an earlier schedule.

Q: Does puberty hurt?

Some parts can be a little uncomfortable - like when breasts are first developing. But puberty is not supposed to cause serious pain. If anything hurts a lot, tell a trusted adult.

Big Sis Says



Growing up is not a race.
There are no prizes for starting first. There are no
penalties for starting last.
Your body knows exactly what it is doing - trust it.
And remember: every woman you look up to has been
exactly where you are right now.

Your Body Is Speaking — Listen!

When puberty begins, your body starts going through several different changes. Some happen quickly, some slowly. Let us go through each one so that *nothing surprises you!*

1 Breast Development

2 Hip Widening

3 Body Hair

4 More Sweating

5 Skin Changes

6 Growth Spurt

7 Private Parts

PUBERTY WORD SEARCH

A H U E T Y D C R D Q C U R V O W B
 B R E A S T D D E V E L O P M E N T
 O H U O K B T U I I G C I Y W D N C
 V R H I P I I W I D E N I N G H A G
 P Y U U S J O B O D D Y H A I R Y O
 B K N S O W S R O T N L I K A K B X
 H B R E A S T D E V E L O P M E N T
 P H B C A L B H D R Y N L E A P Y Q
 U P O W L N B O N I N G T A N B U S
 B R K M O R E E S W E A T I N G E L
 Z D L S K I I N C H A N G E S T N E
 D X Y K G R O W T H S P U R T K H J
 D G O G R O W I T H S P U R T T K Z
 E N Z P R I V A T E P A R T S Z V Y

Words to Find

1. Breast Development
2. Hip Widening
3. Body Hair
4. More Sweating
5. Skin Changes
6. Growth Spurt
7. Private Parts

One of the first signs of puberty is a feeling of soreness or small bumps under your nipples - called **BREAST BUDS**. They are the very beginning of your breasts growing.

👍 THE SCIENCE PART

Breast buds happen because **oestrogen** starts telling the fatty tissue in your chest to grow. Over the next few years, your breasts will slowly develop into their adult shape.

One breast may grow faster than the other at first. Totally normal — they usually even out. Every girl's breasts develop to a different size. There is no 'right' size.

When you start developing, you may need a **training bra** - a soft, wire-free bra. Your mum, aunty, or older sister can help you know when it is time.



BIG SIS SAYS

Be patient with your body. Every girl blooms at her own perfect time.



2 Your Hips Are Widening

Your hips - the sides of your body below your waist - are getting wider and rounder. This is part of your body preparing to become an adult woman. Clothes that fit before might feel tighter around the hips. Your body is just growing into a new shape.

3 Body Hair Is Growing

Hair will start growing under your arms, around your private parts, and on your legs. This is normal for ALL girls - not something to be ashamed of.

🕒 THE SCIENCE PART

Body hair grows because **androgens** (a type of hormone) signal certain hair follicles to become active. This hair helps protect your skin in those sensitive areas.

Whether you shave, trim, or leave your body hair natural is a personal and often cultural choice. If you do shave, use clean tools and be gentle.

You Are Sweating More

You might sweat more and that sweat might smell different - this is **body odour (BO)**. New glands in your armpits become active during puberty.

EASY TO MANAGE!

**Bathe every day**

Twice a day is better in our African heat!

**Use deodorant or antiperspirant**

Both work - find what feels right.

**Change your clothes regularly**

Fresh clothes keep you smelling fresh!

Your Skin May Change

Puberty hormones cause your skin to produce more oil, which can lead to **pimples** (acne) on your face, back, or chest.

Acne is **incredibly common** — almost every teenager gets it. It does **NOT** mean you are dirty.

More on skincare in Section Three - Beauty!

You Are Getting Taller

During puberty, most girls have a **GROWTH SPURT** - a time when you grow taller quite quickly. You might feel your legs or back aching slightly - these are called **growing pains** and are completely normal.



Your Private Parts Are Changing

Your vagina and the skin around it (called the **vulva**) will also change. You might notice a small amount of **whitish or yellowish discharge** in your underwear - your body's way of keeping itself clean.

Discharge usually starts about **6–12 months before your first period** — your body giving you a heads-up!

Real Questions. Real Answers



Q: I found white stuff in my underwear. Is something wrong with me?

Not at all! This is called vaginal discharge - your body's natural cleaning system. It should be whitish or clear without a strong bad smell. If it's green or yellow with a bad smell or causes itching, tell a trusted adult.

Q: My breasts are not the same size. Is this normal?

Yes! Very common, especially while still growing. Most women have breasts that are slightly different sizes. They usually become more similar over time.

Q: I am 13 and I have almost none of these changes yet. Should I be worried?

Some girls start puberty later than others. If you are 14 with no changes at all, a doctor visit is a good idea just to be sure. Many girls are simply late starters - and that is perfectly fine!

Big Sis Says



Your body is not a problem to be fixed.

It is a home to be cared for.

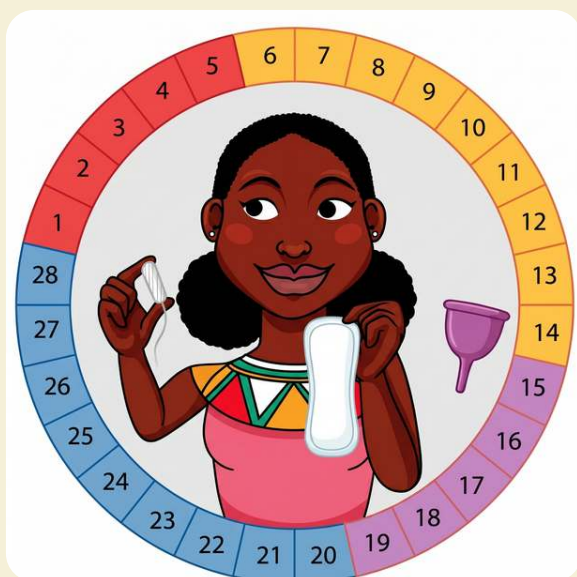
Every single change is your body doing exactly what it was
designed to do. Be patient. Be kind.

Never compare your body to another girl's body. You are
on your own beautiful timeline.

Your Period — The Monthly Visitor

Okay, let us talk about one of the biggest topics in all of puberty: your **PERIOD**.

Some girls know what a period is before they get one. Some girls have no idea and get very scared the first time. This chapter is making sure you are fully prepared - **no surprises, no fear**.

[What is a period?](#)[When will it come?](#)[What does it feel like?](#)[Your period kit](#)[Hygiene rules](#)[Managing cramps](#)

What Is a Period?

🕒 THE SCIENCE PART

Inside your body, you have two small organs called **OVARIES** containing thousands of tiny eggs. Every month, one egg is released — this is called **OVULATION**.

At the same time, your **uterus** (womb) builds up a soft, thick lining — like preparing a cosy home for the egg.

If the egg is not fertilised, the lining is not needed. So the body sheds it — flowing gently out through your vagina over several days. **THIS is your period.**

It is sometimes called **menstruation** (men-stroo-AY-shun). The blood you see is mostly the uterine lining - not like blood from a cut.

Most girls lose about **4–12 teaspoons of blood** per period — it often looks like more than it actually is.

When Will My Period Come?

Most girls get their first period between **ages 10 and 15**, usually about 2-3 years after breasts start developing.

SIGNS YOUR PERIOD MAY BE COMING SOON

- ✓ Breast development for about 2 years
- ✓ Getting pubic and underarm hair
- ✓ Vaginal discharge in your underwear
- ✓ Cramping or heaviness in your lower belly

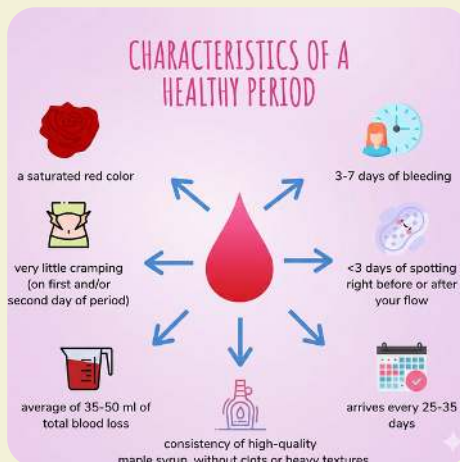
What Will It Look Like?

   Brown dark red bright red - all completely normal.

The first period is often **light** and may be irregular for the first year or two.

3-7 days
how long it lasts

21-35 days
between periods



What Does a Period Feel Like?

Some girls feel almost nothing. Others experience some or all of these:

CRAMPS

Squeezing or aching in the lower belly or lower back

BLOATING

Your belly might feel puffy or full

MOOD CHANGES

Feeling more emotional or irritable for a day or two

TIREDNESS

Feeling more tired while your body works hard

All of these are caused by hormones and the uterus contracting. They are **normal** — but if cramps are very severe, tell a trusted adult.



Your Period Kit

Always carry a small period kit so you are never caught off guard.

WHAT TO PUT IN IT

- ✓ **Pads**
Different sizes for day and night
- ✓ **A spare pair of underwear**
Just in case!
- ✓ **Wet wipes or tissue**
For staying clean when you change
- ✓ **A small dark bag**
For wrapping used pads discreetly

TYPES OF PERIOD PRODUCTS ACROSS AFRICA

- **Disposable pads** - most common, available in most shops.
- **Reusable cloth pads** - washable, eco-friendly, common in rural areas.
- **Menstrual cups** - less common but available in larger cities.



Hygiene Rules for Your Period

- ✓ **Change your pad every 3–4 hours**
Even if not full - prevents smell and infection.
- ✓ **Wash your hands before and after**
Every single time you change your pad.
- ✓ **Wash your private area with warm water**
Outside only - no soap inside the vagina.
- ✓ **Never flush pads down the toilet**
Wrap in paper or cloth and put in a bin.

What to Do About Cramps

- ✓ **Drink warm water or ginger tea**
Warmth helps relax the muscles.
- ✓ **Place a warm cloth on your lower belly**
A hot water bottle works well too.
- ✓ **Light movement or gentle stretching**
A slow walk can help a lot.
- ✓ **Rest when you need to**
Your body is working hard - it is okay to slow down.



When to Tell an Adult

Please tell your mum, aunty, teacher, or another trusted adult if any of these happen:

Your period is **SO painful** you cannot attend school or do normal activities

Your period **lasts more than 7 days**

You are **soaking through a pad in less than 1–2 hours**

You have **not had a period by age 15**

You feel **very dizzy or faint** during your period

These things might be completely fine — but they are worth checking with a doctor. **There is no shame in asking for help.**

Real Questions Real Answers



Q: I got my period at school and stained my uniform. What should I do?

First - breathe. This happens to almost every girl! Tie a jumper around your waist, go to a trusted female teacher or friend. Cold water (not hot!) removes blood stains.

Q: Does getting your period mean I can get pregnant?

It means your body is physically maturing - but getting pregnant requires sex, and you are young and should not be having sex. Your period is simply your body doing its natural monthly work.

Q: My period sometimes comes late or early. Is this normal?

Yes, especially in the first few years! Stress, illness, or big weight changes can affect timing. Tracking in a diary or period apps is a great habit.



BIG SIS SAYS

Your period is not a curse. It is a powerful sign your body is healthy and working exactly as it should. You are part of a beautiful, ancient sisterhood.

Taking Care of Your Growing Body

Clean, Confident & Comfortable

Taking care of your body during puberty is not complicated. It is mostly about *good, consistent habits*. Let us go through the basics.

Bathing

Private area care

Your first bra

Sweat & BO

Skincare routine

Acne & pimples



Bathing

In Africa's warm climate, bathing at least **twice a day** - morning and evening - is strongly recommended during puberty.

PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO

- Your armpits
- Behind your ears & neck
- Your private area (outside)
- Between your toes & feet

Caring for Your Private Area

The vagina is a **self-cleaning organ** - it does not need soap or perfume inside it. In fact, using soap, douches, or perfumed products inside the vagina disrupts the natural balance and can cause infections.

Gently wash the outside with clean warm water. That is enough.



Your First Bra

When your breasts start developing, a soft training bra or sports bra gives gentle support and comfort. Signs it might be time:

SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE READY

- ✓ You feel soreness or discomfort from movement
- ✓ You feel self-conscious or uncomfortable without one
- ✓ Your breast buds are visible through your clothing

Start with a **soft, wire-free bra**. Wash your bra after every 2 wears — bacteria loves warm, damp fabric, especially in our climate.

Dealing with Sweat & Body Odour

- ✓ Bathe daily (twice if possible)
- ✓ Apply deodorant to clean, dry armpits after bathing
- ✓ Change clothes after heavy sweating or sports

Natural alternatives that work: lime or lemon juice, baking soda mixed with coconut oil, raw shea butter.

Simple Skincare for Puberty

YOUR SIMPLE 3-STEP ROUTINE

STEP 1 — CLEANSE

Wash your face gently with a mild soap or face wash every morning and night. Do not scrub too hard.

STEP 2 — MOISTURISE

Apply a light cream or natural oil - shea butter, coconut oil, or aloe vera all work beautifully.

STEP 3 — DRINK WATER ☀️

The most underrated skincare tip! Water flushes out toxins and keeps skin healthy. Aim for 6-8 cups a day.

ABOUT PIMPLES & ACNE

- Do not pop or squeeze pimples - this causes scarring
- Avoid touching your face throughout the day
- If acne is severe or painful, see a doctor - it is treatable



NO Bleaching Creams

Skin bleaching creams contain harmful chemicals like mercury and hydroquinone that can permanently damage your skin, affect your kidneys and liver, and cause serious health problems.

Your skin tone - whether dark, medium, or light - is beautiful and is part of who you are.

It is not something that needs to be changed.



Big Sis Says



Taking care of your body is an act of love - love for yourself and respect for the home you were given. You don't need expensive products. You need consistent habits.

Small, daily actions add up to a confident, healthy girl.

The background of the entire page is a stylized illustration of four young boys of African descent. They are wearing traditional African clothing with geometric patterns in shades of purple, blue, and orange. The illustration is rendered in a soft, painterly style. Behind the boys, there are concentric, semi-circular lines in a light purple hue, creating a halo-like effect. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of purple and blue.

SECTION TWO

B-O-Y-S

This section is not really about boys - it is about YOU. Your emotions, your feelings, your heart.

Your Heart Is Growing Too

Emotions, Moods & All the Big Feelings

You know how hormones change your body? Well - those same hormones also affect your **EMOTIONS**.

One minute you might feel completely fine. The next minute, you burst into tears over something small. Or feel suddenly angry. Or deeply happy. Or embarrassed. Welcome to puberty emotions - they are **LOUD** and **REAL**.

🕒 THE SCIENCE PART

Hormones affect the brain's emotion centres. At the same time, the **prefrontal cortex** — which helps you think calmly and make good decisions — is still developing. It won't be fully mature until your mid-20s! This is why emotions feel so overwhelming. It is not a character flaw — it is science.



What Are All These Emotions?

During puberty, you might experience:

Mood swings

Very happy, then suddenly sad

Irritability

Getting annoyed or frustrated more easily

Self-consciousness

Feeling like everyone is judging you

Loneliness

Even when surrounded by people

All of these are normal. You are not going mad. You are just growing.

Healthy Ways to Handle Big Feelings



Talk

Share with a trusted person - mum, aunty, older sister, teacher



Write

Keep a journal - write your feelings without judging them



Move

Walk, play ampe, jump rope - physical activity releases emotional energy



Create

Music, drawing, dancing, cooking - creative expression is healthy



Rest

Emotions are worse when you are tired - sleep matters more than you think



Real Questions Real Answers



Q: I cried for almost no reason last week and felt silly afterwards. Am I okay?

You are completely okay! The hormonal changes during puberty genuinely make your emotions more intense. Crying is not weakness - it is a natural release. Be kind to yourself.

Q: I feel like my mum and I argue so much more now than we used to. Why?

Very common! As you grow up, you naturally start wanting more independence. Your mum may not always understand the new version of you immediately. Communicate calmly, listen to her too - she loves you even when it feels like she doesn't understand you.



BIG SIS SAYS

Your feelings are valid - all of them, even the messy ones. But your feelings are not always facts. When emotions are very loud, slow down before you act. Take a breath. Sleep on it. Talk to someone first. The goal is not to never feel - it is to learn how to feel without being swept away.

CHAPTER 2

Crushes, Feelings & Friendships

When Your Heart Gets Involved

Okay, let us talk about crushes. Remember when you could just play bano or jump rope with the boys in your neighbourhood without any awkwardness? Then puberty arrives, and suddenly you notice that one particular boy and your heart starts doing something strange... That feeling? That is called a **CRUSH**. And it is very normal.

👍 THE SCIENCE PART

When you see someone you are attracted to, your brain releases **dopamine** (makes you happy and excited) and **adrenaline** (makes your heart beat faster). These are real chemical reactions — which is why a crush can feel SO intense!

Having a crush means... and doesn't mean

✅ IT DOES MEAN

You are a normal human being with developing emotions

❌ IT DOES NOT MEAN

You need a boyfriend right now, or have to act on it

Boys as Friends

Not every boy you like is a crush. Boys can be great friends - just like when you were younger. Healthy friendships with boys are built on:

- Mutual respect
- Honesty
- Feeling safe
- Being yourself

Social Media, Boys & Pressure

Social media is full of messages about romance that are often unrealistic, exaggerated, or just plain wrong. Watch out for:

Boys who message you **only to compliment your appearance**

Boys who **ask for photos of your body** — this is NEVER okay

Being **pressured to be in a relationship** or 'prove' your feelings

Feeling like something is wrong with you because you don't have a boyfriend

Q: I like a boy but he doesn't seem to like me back. I feel so hurt.

One-sided crushes are one of the most common human experiences. It hurts - and it's okay to feel that hurt. Your worth has absolutely nothing to do with whether one person likes you back.

Q: All my friends have boyfriends and I feel like I'm the only one without one.

Not all your friends may be as far along as they seem - people exaggerate. There is no prize for having a boyfriend first. Focus on knowing who you are, building friendships, and pursuing your goals.

Boundaries — Your Body Belongs to You

Safety, Saying No & Understanding Pressure

A boundary is a clear statement about what is okay and what is not okay with your body, your feelings, and your space.

Your body belongs to YOU. No one has the right to touch you, pressure you, or make decisions about your body without your clear, willing consent.

PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES - WHO MAY TOUCH YOUR PRIVATE PARTS?

- ✓ A doctor or nurse during a medical examination - with a trusted adult present
- ✓ Yourself, for hygiene purposes

If ANYONE else touches your private parts without your consent — this is SEXUAL ABUSE. It is NEVER your fault. Tell a trusted adult immediately.



Trust Your Feelings

If any touch, situation, or conversation makes you feel uncomfortable, scared, confused, or like you need to hide it from your parents - **TRUST THAT FEELING.**

A safe adult **NEVER** asks a child to keep secrets from their parents. If something feels wrong - it probably is. Tell someone. You will not be in trouble. You will be protected.

Protecting Your Private World Online

NEVER DO THESE THINGS

Send photos of your body to anyone — including people you know

Share your address, school name, or location with people you meet online

Agree to meet alone someone you only know from social media

Respond to strangers who message you romantically or ask personal questions

Once an image leaves your phone, you have zero control over where it goes. A person who truly respects you will **NEVER** ask for this.

About Pornography

Pornography is sexual content online. Some girls your age have come across it by accident or by looking for it. Here is the truth:

- 1 It is not real. It is a performance for money. Not what healthy relationships look like.
- 2 It affects your brain. Watching it young changes how you think about bodies and relationships.
- 3 It is not for you. Completely inappropriate for children and teenagers.
- 4 If you have seen it by accident: Don't panic. Close it, step away, and tell a trusted adult. You are not in trouble - you need support.



BIG SIS SAYS

You are not your body. You are not what someone wants from your body. You are a whole person - with a mind, gifts, a future, and deep value. Guard yourself. Not from a place of fear, but from wisdom.

Protecting Your Heart

Healthy Love, Wise Choices & Staying Focused

Growing up means learning what love actually is - and what it is not.



REAL LOVE IS

- Patient - doesn't rush or pressure
- Kind - makes you feel safe
- Respectful - honours your NO
- Honest - no hiding or lying
- Consistent - not sweet then cruel



REAL LOVE IS NOT

- Pressure to send photos or be alone
- Control over what you wear or who you talk to
- Isolation from friends and family
- Threats or jealousy 'disguised as love'
- Making you feel ashamed or worthless

Staying Focused on Your Life

Right now, the most important relationship you can invest in is the one with yourself - who you are, what you believe, what you are building.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking... It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

This is not about being afraid of relationships forever. It is about timing and wisdom. There is a right season for everything.

Q: My boyfriend says if I love him I will do sexual things with him. Is he right?

No. This is a manipulation tactic and a very clear RED FLAG. Real love does not require you to prove it with your body. Please talk to a trusted adult about this relationship.

Q: Is it bad to want to be in a relationship at my age?

It's not bad to WANT one - wanting connection is human. But wisdom asks: is this the right time? Will it help or distract you from your goals? Think it through honestly.



BIG SIS SAYS

Your future self is counting on the choices you make today. Protect your heart - not because it is fragile, but because it is precious. The right love, at the right time, will add to your life - not subtract from it.



SECTION THREE

B·E·A·U·T·Y

Growing Beautiful From the Inside Out

CHAPTER 1

What Is Real Beauty?

More Than What the Mirror Shows

Social media says beauty is a certain body shape, skin tone, long hair, perfect teeth. And those standards keep changing - they were never designed to make you feel good. They were designed to make you feel like you need something more.

PROVERBS 31:30

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

1 PETER 3:3-4

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment... Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit."

'Gentle and quiet spirit' means a spirit that is at peace - not chasing attention or needing everyone's approval. That is actually a very POWERFUL kind of person.

Across African Cultures

Across Africa, traditional ideas of beauty have **always** included **character**, not just appearance:

- **West Africa** - a girl's beauty was described by how she greeted elders and carried herself with dignity
- **East Africa** - Maasai and Kikuyu traditions taught that the woman of good character was prized above all others
- **Ethiopia** - Queen Makeda (the Queen of Sheba) was celebrated not just for beauty but for her extraordinary wisdom

Character is the deepest form of beauty.

Q: Everyone says the lighter-skinned girls are prettier. How do I feel good about my dark skin?

This belief - called colourism - is a harmful legacy of colonialism. It is a LIE. Every skin tone in African beauty is beautiful and full of dignity. Melanin protects you from sun damage. You don't need to change your skin. You need to change the voices you are listening to.

Q: I don't look like the girls in music videos. Should I try to look more like them?

Those images are heavily edited, filtered, and lit by professional teams. Chasing a filtered version of someone else is a race you cannot win. Focus instead on knowing and celebrating your own features.



BIG SIS SAYS

You were made on purpose, with purpose, by a Creator who does not make mistakes. Real beauty is not achieved - it is discovered, by learning who you truly are.

CHAPTER 2

Loving the Skin You're In

Body Image, Self-Talk & Skin Care

Almost every girl going through puberty has looked in the mirror and thought something negative about herself. Those thoughts are **NOT facts**. They are feelings - stirred by comparison, social media messages, and the emotional intensity of puberty.

COMMON THOUGHTS AND THE TRUTH

"I'm too fat"

Bodies come in many healthy shapes. Your weight is not your worth.

"My skin is too dark"

No such thing. Melanin is beautiful and healthy.

"My hair won't grow"

African hair grows upward before outward. Give it time and care.

"I'm ugly"

This is your feelings talking not the truth. Talk to someone who loves you.



Skincare for African Skin

ALL SKIN TYPES

Wash face gently twice daily · Moisturise (shea butter, coconut oil, aloe vera) · Drink 6-8 cups of water · Sleep 8 hours

ACNE-PRONE

Use salicylic acid wash if available · Change pillowcase often · Don't touch your face · See a doctor if severe

DRY SKIN (HARMATTAN)

Use heavier moisturiser · Drink more water · Avoid very hot baths

OILY SKIN (HUMID)

Use light oil-free moisturiser · Blot (don't wipe) excess oil · Use gentle toner

Hair Care

African hair is beautiful and comes in many textures. What matters is keeping it clean, moisturised, and healthy.

- ✓ Wash hair every 1-2 weeks
- ✓ Moisturise with water-based products + shea butter or coconut oil
- ✓ Be gentle — don't pull or rip at tangles
- ✓ Tight styles that cause headaches can cause hair loss over time



BIG SIS SAYS

There is a big difference between caring for something you love and trying to fix something you hate. Approach your body with love.
Speak kindly to it - every day.

CHAPTER 3

Dressing With Confidence & Grace

Style That Speaks Without Shouting

How you dress tells the world something about you before you even open your mouth. This is not about following trends - it is about knowing who you are and dressing in a way that **reflects that**.

AFRICAN FASHION — A CELEBRATION 🌍

West Africa

Kente, Ankara print, kaba & slit, boubous, headwraps

Southern Africa

Rich beadwork, isidwaba, vibrant printed fabrics

East Africa

Kitenge, kangas, colourful shuka, beadwork

North Africa

Embroidered robes, kaftan styles, colourful hijabs

What is modesty — and why it is not boring

Modesty means dressing in a way that respects your body and reflects your values. You can be completely modest and still be stylish, colourful, and creative.

"I am worth more than what you can see. Get to know ME."



Practical Style Tips



School

Clean, neat, well-pressed. Follow school requirements.



Place of worship

Respectful and modest to honour the space.



Special occasions

Elegant, colourful, beautiful - without needing to expose your body.

QUICK CHECK BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE



Can you sit, walk, and move freely without adjusting your clothes?



Would you feel comfortable if your mum or grandmother saw you?



Does this represent who you really are?

Q: Boys at school say I dress 'too covered up' and I'm not fun. Should I change?

Absolutely not. Their opinion about your clothing does not define your value. Girls who dress with confidence and dignity attract much better, more respectful attention over time.

Q: I like African print fabric but my friends think it's not cool.

YES - wear it anyway! African fashion is among the most vibrant in the world. The people who once looked down on our fabrics now pay designer prices for them. Wear your Ankara, your kente, or your kitenge with pride.

CHAPTER 4

Your Character Is Your Crown

The Beauty That Never Fades

Character is who you are when no one is watching. It is built slowly, through small choices, every single day.



THE CHARACTER CROWN

Kindness - warm and caring, even when not convenient

Courage - speaking up for what is right

Humility - knowing your worth without looking down on others

Honesty - telling the truth even when it is hard

Diligence - working hard, not cutting corners

Integrity - being the same person at home, school, and online

The Proverbs 31 woman was praised not for perfect skin or the right body shape - but because she was industrious, wise, kind, faithful, and full of dignity. She is still being talked about thousands of years later.



Confidence — The Right Kind

True confidence is the quiet knowing that you have value - not because of how you look or what you own, but because you know who you are and whose you are.

CONFIDENCE GROWS WHEN YOU

- ✓ Invest in your education and skills
- ✓ Act in line with your values
- ✓ Spend time in prayer and reflection
- ✓ Surround yourself with people who push you toward your best self

AFFIRMATIONS — SPEAK THESE OVER YOURSELF

"I am made with purpose and on purpose."

"My brain is capable of great things."

"I am growing - and growing is good."

"My worth is not tied to my looks or who likes me."



BIG SIS SAYS

One day, people will not primarily remember what you looked like. They will remember how you made them feel. They will remember your character. Build that. Protect that. Grow that. Because your character, my dear, is your crown. And no one can take it from you.

A FINAL WORD

From Your Big Sis

You made it to the end of this guide - and that means something. It means you care about understanding yourself.

That is wisdom.

Growing up in Africa as a girl is one of the most beautiful, complex, and powerful things. You carry in your DNA the strength of women who survived wars, built kingdoms, and raised nations.

You are their daughter.

The changes happening in your body are not accidents. The emotions rising in your heart are not mistakes. The beauty growing in you - inside and outside - is intentional and sacred.

With so much love, Your Big Sis

Reach out and let's talk:   059-114-0404

