

MY CHANGING BODY

Why do my moods change so frequently and suddenly?

KEY WORDS

mood | hormones | emotions | personality



Being a teenager can be challenging – your body and mind go through many changes, sometimes quite quickly and unexpectedly! Because of this, you might notice your moods swinging all over the place like a rollercoaster. Don't worry just yet, though, because that's totally normal for this phase in life (pewh!)

Now, let's chat about what usually causes those mood swings:

- **Changes in your body**

Adolescence is a time of biological and physical changes in the body. Suddenly having a big zit in the middle of your forehead or shoulders that are getting too wide for your favourite sweater can be a cause of sadness or irritability.



• Natural hormonal imbalances

During adolescence, hormones surge in a teenager's body. Hormones are like little messengers that travel from your brain to tell your body what to do. They're the reason why you grow taller, why your voice might change, and, yes, even why your emotions go up and down. Symptoms such as nervousness, sensitivity, and mood swings are the result of the hormone storm with the main ones being **estrogen** in girls and **testosterone** in boys. However, these behaviours are also heavily influenced by the development of your brain, which consumes a considerable amount of energy. The prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making, impulse control, and goal setting, is one of the brain structures that reaches full efficiency only at the age of 25. It's precisely this lack of a fully developed prefrontal cortex that causes changing emotions and a lack of rational thinking in teenagers.

• Your friends and peers

For a person going through adolescence, being accepted and liked by your peers seems like one of the most important things in the world. One's position in the group and number of friends become significant aspects of a teenager's life and can influence their self-esteem. Therefore, if you're experiencing issues in relationships with peers, it can be particularly painful and lead to a bad mood.

- **Demands from school or other responsibilities**

Teenagers' mood swings can be closely linked to the school environment, including academic difficulties and the classroom atmosphere in general. You may feel overwhelmed by the amount of schoolwork and expectations from teachers or parents, leading to feelings of depression and sudden mood changes.

- **Defining your own identity**

Attempting to answer the question "who am I?" often leaves teenagers with little energy for anything else. You may become irritated, highly sensitive to any words of criticism directed at you, and easily thrown off balance.

Please note that: A prolonged period of sadness and melancholy (approximately two weeks) may be a sign of depression, and making the decision to talk to a professional such as a counsellor or a psychologist might help give you the resources to stabilise your mood.

So, there you have it! Your mood rollercoaster might seem like a wild and unpredictable ride, but just remember, it's normal, and everyone around you is riding this rollercoaster, too. Hang in there, and don't forget to go easy on yourself!

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