

CT Children's CLASP Guideline Clinician Guide

Early Onset Pubic Hair

CLINICIAN GUIDE: SEXUAL MATURITY STAGING

Below are the Tanner Stages described in detail. Tanner Stage 1 corresponds to the pre-pubertal form for all three sites of development. This progresses to Tanner Stage 5, the final adult form. Breast staging, genital staging, and other physical markers of puberty (e.g., height velocity) are better indicators of pubertal development than pubic hair staging because of the independent maturation of the adrenal axis. Although adrenal maturation often coincides with HPG axis maturation, it is important to note that these processes occur independently of each other and that pubarche itself is not the best indicator of pubertal development.

Pubic Hair Scale (both males and females)

- Stage 1: No hair
- Stage 2: Downy hair
- Stage 3: Scant terminal hair
- Stage 4: Terminal hair that fills the entire triangle overlying the pubic region
- Stage 5: Terminal hair that extends beyond the inguinal crease onto the thigh

Female Breast Development Scale

- Stage 1: No glandular breast tissue palpable
- Stage 2: Breast bud palpable under the areola → 1st pubertal sign in females
- Stage 3: Breast tissue palpable outside areola; no areolar development
- Stage 4: Areola elevated above the contour of the breast, forming a “double scoop” appearance
- Stage 5: Areolar mound recedes into single breast contour with areolar hyperpigmentation, papillae development, and nipple protrusion

Male External Genitalia Scale

- Stage 1: Testicular volume < 4 ml (or long axis < 2.5 cm)
- Stage 2: Testicular volume 4 ml-8 ml (or long axis 2.5 to 3.3 cm long) → 1st pubertal sign in males
- Stage 3: Testicular volume 9 ml-12 ml (or long axis 3.4 to 4.0 cm long)
- Stage 4: Testicular volume 15-20 ml (or long axis 4.1 to 4.5 cm long)
- Stage 5: Testicular volume > 20 ml (or long axis > 4.5 cm long)

Source: Emmanuel M, Bokor BR. Tanner Stages. [Updated 2022 Dec 11]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2023 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470280/>