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Background

What are Tanner stages?

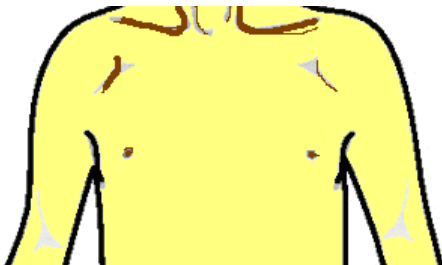
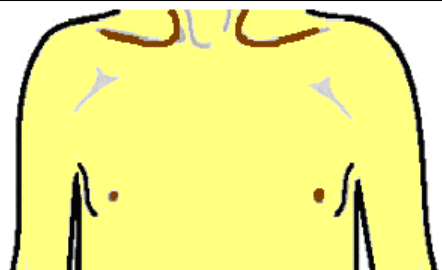
Tanner stages defines different levels of sexual maturity, based on the development of primary (genitalia) and secondary sex (pubic hair and breasts) characteristics. These stages were first described by James Mouilyan Tanner.




What are Tanner stages used for?

Sexual maturity rating is important in cases where delayed ([link](#)) or precocious puberty ([link](#)) is suspected or followed. It provides a means of documentation and standardization.




Maturity rating



Staging for breast development

	<p>Stage 1 represents the prepubertal breast in which there is elevation only of the papilla.</p>
	<p>At stage 2, a "breast bud" forms below the areola</p>











	<p>In stage 3, there is further enlargement and elevation of both breast and areola</p>
	<p>In stage 4, the areola forms a secondary mound above the contour of the breast</p>
	<p>The stage 5 breast is fully mature, with recession of the secondary mound and a smooth breast contour.</p>

Staging for male genitalia development

	<p>Stage 1 describes prepubertal genitalia.</p>
	<p>In stage 2, there is enlargement of the testes and scrotum, with reddening and thinning of the scrotum, but no enlargement of the penis.</p>
	<p>In stage 3, the penis begins to enlarge, first in length and later in diameter. The testes and scrotum continue to enlarge.</p>

	In stage 4, the testes and scrotum continue to enlarge, with continued lengthening of the penis and enlargement of the glans.
	Stage 5 represents genitalia of adult size and proportion.

a) **Staging for pubic hair**

	In the prepubertal stage 1, there may be fine vellus hair that is no different from that found over the abdominal wall.	
	In stage 2, there is growth of sparse straight hair, primarily at the base of the penis or along the labia.	
	In stage 3, hair increases in quantity and is darker and curlier.	
	Stage 4 is characterized by pubic hair that resembles adult pubic hair, although the escutcheon covers a smaller area than seen in adults	
	Finally, in stage 5, pubic hair has increased further in volume, spread onto the medial thighs, and taken on characteristic male or female configuration.	

References

1. Rosen, D. Physiologic Growth and Development During Adolescence. *Pediatrics in Review*. 2004;25:194-200.
<http://pedsinreview.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/25/6/194>