



Health & Fitness

**Girlology: A Girl's Guide to Stuff that Matters**

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HCI Teens

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Girl stuff. Periods. Sex. Boyfriends. Cranky parents. Friends who used to be enemies, and geeks who are now friends. And what is going on with the body? What do all these changes mean, and why don't they happen to all girls the same way at the same time?

These are timeless questions for teenage girls, but as each generation of preteens and teens faces different cultural and societal changes and stresses, older guidebooks—while still valid in terms of information offered—read as outdated. This book, with its friendly, blunt-yet-calm approach, offers the teen girls of the generation some clear answers to all those questions and more. The authors, one of whom is a pediatrician and the other an OB/GYN, are both mothers of daughters, giving them a wide variety of perspectives on the adolescent body and mindset.

Countering trends of girls feeling inferior or insecure, the authors use *Girlology* to urge girls to develop Girl Power: developing control and confidence by understanding the process of change, both emotional and physical, as it affects not only the reader, but the her friends and family as well. The book's frank discussion of female body parts and how they change during puberty, as well as how they function during sex, provides diagrams and straightforward language to answer questions that teens may be too afraid or embarrassed to ask. Terminology is clearly explained, from mundane topics such as body hair removal, to mysterious ones such as sexual organs.

Yet the book also urges girls to trust their mothers (who have likely been through most of these emotional and physical quandaries themselves) rather than trying to face these changes alone. The authors encourage girls to learn how to assess what kind of person they want themselves to be, as well as what kinds of people they really want as friends, beyond the superficial popularity roles.

The highlight of this book is its friendly approach and its “hey, really, this is all normal” tone. It’s non-threatening and informative in terms preteens and teens can clearly understand, and provides clear information about the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as the emotional devastation caused by boyfriends and disloyal girlfriends. If anything, the book verges on too cheerful at times, but that is a minor fault in a book that provides so much excellent information in a readable way.

Today’s preteen and teen girls can use all the help they can get, and *Girlology* is an excellent resource for those wanting information, solace, and help.

*Amy Rea*