What happens when?

Girls usually start puberty anywhere between eight and 14 years of age.

Puberty happens in stages and can be on-again-off-again in nature. Someone may have early signs of puberty then not show another sign for years. All the physical changes can happen within a year and a half, or can occur over five or more. Puberty changes generally occur in a certain order, but the order can also be different.

How quickly one develops in their teen years doesn't necessarily affect how they will look as an adult. A person who stays short all through school may still end up the tallest by the time they reach 18 years of age and attend their secondary school graduation night.

Somewhere around 8 to 13

- Hormones have quietly switched on inside the female body and the ovaries are growing bigger.
- Breast growth begins with small buds developing behind the nipple. The breast area can become quite tender.
- Fine pubic hair begins to grow under the arm and on the vulva.
- Height and weight increase. There is a growth spurt.
- Many girls will experience their first period. (The average age for a first period is 11½ years.)

Then from around 13 (can be from 9 to 15)

- Breasts growth continues, becoming fuller and rounder in shape.
- Pubic hair continues to grow, becoming darker, thicker and curlier.
- The vagina grows slightly larger and begins secreting a clear or whitish fluid, which is a normal cleaning process.
- Muscle mass develops (not as much as boys) and the hips may start to widen.
- The sweat and oil glands become more active. This may result in acne.

Then from around 14 (can be from 10 to 16)

- Ovulation (release of egg cells) can begin, but typically not in a regular monthly routine yet.
- The menstruation cycle may begin, and become more regular for some.
- The pelvis grows wider and her face starts to change its shape.
- Pubic hair forms a triangular shape in front and around the genital area, and underarm hair grows darker. Her underarm hair and body hair starts to change and grow darker.
- The uterus grows slightly larger.

Then at around 16 to 19

- Adult height is usually reached by the age of 15 or 16.
- Pubic hair is fully established.
- Breast development is complete.
- Menstruation and ovulation have become regular and occur monthly.