

## Questions from children.

### **Is it “bad” to be naked?**

Being naked is not a matter of right or wrong or good or bad. It is more to do with the situation and how appropriate it is.

You'll probably want to discuss these questions, if they are raised, as a family, including the children. Explain that no one should be made to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed or be forced to do something they're unhappy with. Think about the ages of your children when you're answering them.

*You could say to children:*

- It's not about “good” or “bad” but more about what is the best way to behave in different situations.
- You don't walk down the road with no clothes on, you don't take a bath or shower with clothes on and you wouldn't swim in a public swimming pool with no swimming costume.
- No one should ever be made to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. We need to respect each other's feelings.
- If you ever feel uncomfortable or worried talk to me, or another adult you trust such as auntie, uncle, teacher, coach.
- Your child can also get confidential support from Childline by calling free on 0800 1111 or through [Childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk).

### **Why would someone want to touch me under my pants?**

Like many adults, children may well not understand why anyone would want to touch them under their pants. And you don't want to frighten them, so choose what you say, and your words, carefully. Children develop and mature differently. When they're young keep what you say simple and you can go into more detail as they grow older.

*You could say to children:*

- That's a very difficult question and there's no one answer that is right - even grown ups don't agree on the answer.
- We don't always know why people want to do some things. There can be several reasons why it happens – they may be unwell, they may have a lot of stress in their lives, they may never have been taught that it's a wrong thing to do. But what is important is that you know it's not OK.
- Whatever the reason, the most important thing to remember is that it's never OK for someone to touch you under your underwear. You can always say NO. And you must tell someone you trust if something like this happened.
- A doctor, a nurse, or someone else whose job it is to look after you, may need to examine you under your underwear but they will always ask for your permission first.

### **Am I allowed to say “No” to a kiss or a hug from a family member or refuse to sit on their lap?**

For many children this is not an issue and you should try to avoid creating a problem if possible. But if they do seem uncomfortable with this remember that children should never be made to kiss or be kissed by someone or forced to have hugs, cuddles or sit on someone's lap against their will. That includes family relations or family friends of all ages.

Talk to your children if they tell you or you see that they don't want to kiss or be kissed and try and find out why and explain that you will help tell the other person that this is what this child wishes to do.

Children may worry about offending older family members but it's important that you reassure them that it's always their choice.

You then may want to have a conversation with the family member or friend and explain how your child feels. You might explain that your child loves or likes them but at the moment doesn't feel comfortable with physical signs of affection.

Try and find a way your child can still greet your family or friends that suits them such as giving a high five or shaking hands.

*You could say to children:*

- Your body belongs to you and it's always your choice.
- You don't have to kiss or cuddle – or be kissed and cuddled – by anyone you don't want to or who makes you feel uncomfortable, including family members and friends. If you feel that way, you should talk to me about it.

### **What if someone I know touches me?**

It's a difficult thing to think about but we know that children are sometimes sexually abused by adults who are family members and by people who are known to them. They can also be sexually abused by young people.

You don't want to alarm or distress your child and anything you say should be age appropriate for your child.

*You could say to children:*

- If anyone touches you under your underwear you should tell someone you trust. No one should ever do this. And if anyone, even someone you know, touches you in this way, I want you to tell me or someone else you trust.
- Your child can also get confidential support from Childline by calling free on 0800 1111 or through [Childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk).

### **Does it matter what colour my pants are?**

*You could say to children:*

- Whatever colour your underwear is, it covers up your private parts and no one should ask to see or touch them. If someone does, say 'no' and tell me right away. Sometimes, a doctor, nurse or family members might have to. But they should always explain why, and ask you if it's okay first.