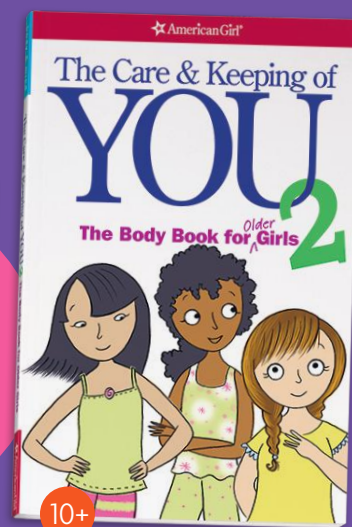


Find the answers girls need in the Care & Keeping of You series

Picking up where *The Care & Keeping of You* left off, our new book is designed for girls ages 10 and up, as they enter this next stage in life. *The Care & Keeping of You 2* will help her understand all of the changes happening to her body, mind, and emotions.

Plus, it's coming from a resource you can trust. We've partnered with author Cara Natterson, M.D. She's a board-certified pediatrician and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics who has treated thousands of children and adolescents while also guiding their parents.

We asked Dr. Natterson to share her thoughts about the Care & Keeping of You family of books and why they mean so much to her, her family, and her patients. Read on to learn why Cara feels so passionately about health care and how parents can support their daughters through puberty.



Cara Natterson, M.D.

Q: Why is the Care & Keeping of You family of books important for parents?

A: Kids want to participate in their health. Sometimes we parents forget this, so we think that we need to nag them to do things. But as a pediatrician, kids tell me all the time that once they understand *why* they should take care of their bodies, they are more willing to and even interested in doing it. The Care & Keeping of You books are manuals for girls to grow up with. These books teach them everything they need to know about how their bodies will change during the years of puberty. The books also help girls understand the difference between things they have the power to control (such as hygiene, nutrition, exercise, sleep, body image, moodiness, and self-esteem) and things they really don't (such as hormones, periods, timing of development, and even brain maturation). Together with American Girl, my goal was to give both girls and their parents guides for this stage of life.

Q: When should parents introduce these books to their girls?

A: I am a big fan of getting ahead of information—not too far ahead, but enough to prepare your kids for what is to come. Plus, girls are going to get the information anyhow, so you might as well be the one giving it and making sure it is accurate. My daughter first started reading *The Care & Keeping of You* at age 7½. When she got to a point that no longer interested her (which, quite frankly, was the bra section), she stopped reading. In the years since, she has picked up the book again, reread the beginning, and then continued farther into it. For some this book will be





a cover-to-cover read, but for others it is more of a resource to be consulted as various questions arise.

The *Care & Keeping of You* books are designed to grow with your girl. The first book is for younger girls and the second is for older ones. The chapters within each book get increasingly more advanced, too. So the youngest girls may want to read just the beginning of *The Care & Keeping of You 1*, whereas older or more developed girls will definitely go all the way through to the end of *The Care & Keeping of You 2*. Both books are great starting points, regardless of where your girl is in her development process, and will be used for years to come.

Q: With a variety of books in the marketplace about puberty, what makes the *Care and Keeping of You* books the go-to resources for parents?

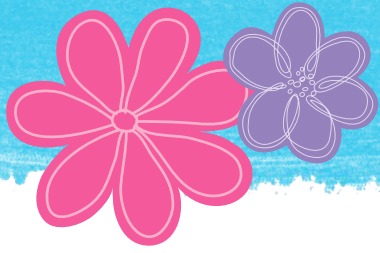
A: I first started recommending *The Care & Keeping of You* a decade before I ever worked with American Girl, because this is the one book out there that resonates with almost every tween and teen. It is clear and filled with great information, but at the same time it is concise rather than overwhelming. The book also feels safe because it uses illustrations to help communicate serious topics. Even though the *Care & Keeping of You* books are about growing up, they don't make girls feel pressured or stressed about going through this process. As a result, parents tell me that their girls want to read these books and they do, too, using them to lead conversations about otherwise tricky topics.

Q: What are some best practices for parents introducing their girls to the *Care & Keeping of You* family of books?

A: I have always told parents to buy the book and just put it on your daughter's shelf. Let it live there for a while—don't force this information on her. You can point it out and tell her that it is a book meant to answer questions that she might have as her body changes. And let her know that you have read it, also!

If she doesn't pick it up right away, don't feel obligated to remind her about it constantly. Trust me, she knows that it's sitting on her shelf. Just as it can be tough for parents to broach this subject, it can also be hard for girls to even read about it. But that's why I love this series. These books tiptoe into the subject matter, starting with the simplest, most basic health information that doesn't feel overwhelming at all.

It's extremely important to remind your child that you went through puberty too, so that she doesn't feel alone in her experiences. But it is equally important not to make the conversation all about you. When your daughter is going through something physical or emotional, remember a time in your life when something similar occurred to you—all of us can recall at least one embarrassing moment connected with our changing bodies, or a tough patch with friends, or a time when we felt emotional for no particular reason—and when the time is right, share this experience with your daughter. When we say to our kids that we know how they feel, they don't always believe us;



but when we have a story to back it up, the channels of communication often burst wide open.

Q: For parents who are uncomfortable talking about everything associated with puberty and growing up, how can the Care & Keeping of You books help?

A: Talking about puberty can be hard! If that has been your experience, you are not alone. As issues arise, find some private time to talk to your daughter. I like having conversations while driving in the car because my daughter and I don't have to make eye contact—my eyes are on the road. This little buffer can make it much easier to talk about sensitive issues. And if you aren't sure what to say, suggest that your daughter read the relevant section in one of the Care & Keeping of You books, and then you can have a chat. Sometimes it is a relief to let words on a page serve as the icebreaker in a touchy conversation.

