

Reproduction

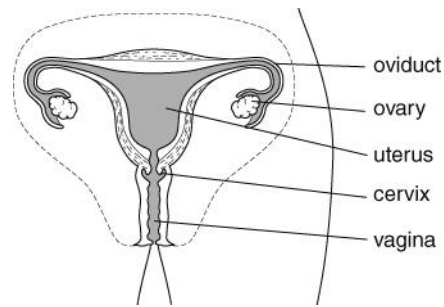
Reproduction produces new living things (**offspring**). Two **parents** are needed for **sexual reproduction**.

Males and females have **reproductive systems**, which contain **reproductive organs** to allow them to reproduce. The ovaries and testes produce **gametes** or **sex cells**.

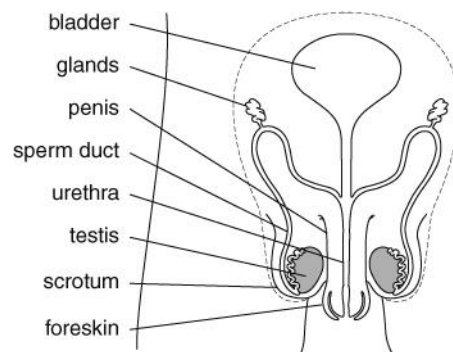
Sexual intercourse in mammals

During **sexual intercourse**, **semen** (sperm cells mixed with special liquids from the **glands**) is forced out of the penis and into the top of the **vagina**. This is called **ejaculation**. The semen travels into the top of the **uterus** and the sperm cells then swim down the **oviducts**.

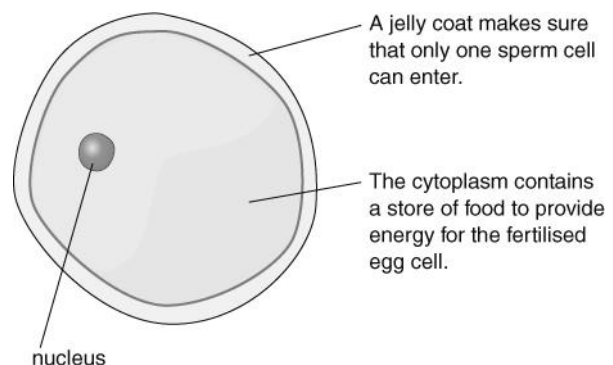
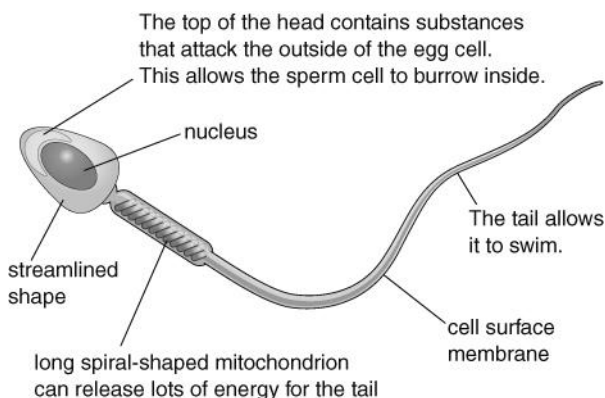
Sperm and egg cells are **adapted** to their **functions**. A sperm cell is much smaller than an egg cell.



The female reproductive system

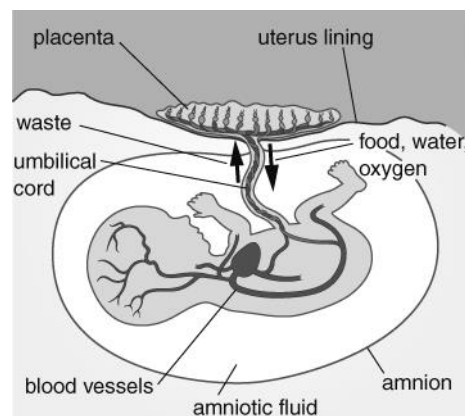


The male reproductive system



Pregnancy in mammals

If an egg cell meets a sperm cell in an oviduct, **fertilisation** can occur (the nuclei from the two cells **fuse**). The **fertilised egg cell** divides to form a ball of cells (an **embryo**). The embryo travels to the uterus where it sinks into the uterus lining (**implantation**). The woman is now **pregnant**. Once the embryo has developed all its organs it is called a **fetus**. It takes about 40 weeks (9 months) for a human fertilised egg cell to grow into a baby ready to be born. This time is called the **gestation period**.



While inside the uterus, the fetus is supplied with oxygen and food by the **placenta**. The placenta also gets rid of waste (especially carbon dioxide) from the fetus. The **umbilical cord** connects the fetus to the placenta.

If a mother smokes, drinks too much alcohol or takes drugs while pregnant, she might damage the baby. The baby might be **premature**.

Birth in mammals

- The uterus starts **contractions** and the woman goes into **labour**.
- The muscles of the **cervix** relax.
- The baby is pushed out head first through the cervix and the vagina.
- The baby starts to breathe and the umbilical cord is cut. The scar left behind is the **navel**.
- Then the placenta is pushed out of the uterus. This is the **afterbirth**.

The mother's breasts contain **mammary glands** that produce milk to feed the baby. Breast milk contains all the nutrients that a baby needs and **antibodies**, which help destroy micro-organisms that might cause diseases.

Growing up

The stages through which an organism goes as it grows and develops are its **lifecycle**. In the human lifecycle, a baby grows into a child. Between the ages of 10 and 14 years, most children start to go through **puberty**. During puberty, **sex hormones** cause big physical changes to occur. **Adolescence** is the time when emotional as well as physical changes occur. It ends at about 18.

Changes in boys	Changes in girls
• hair grows under arms, on face and on chest	• hair grows under arms
• pubic hair grows	• pubic hair grows
• shoulders get wider	• hips get wider
• body smell increases	• body smell increases
• testes start to make sperm cells	• ovaries start to release egg cells
• testes and penis get bigger	• breasts develop
• voice deepens ('breaks')	

After puberty, animals are able to sexually reproduce. Men produce sperm cells for the rest of their lives. Women stop releasing egg cells at the age of 45–55 and this is called the **menopause**.

In all mammals fertilisation happens inside the female. This is called **internal fertilisation**. In some animals (e.g. frogs, fish) fertilisation happens outside the female (**external fertilisation**).

The fertilised egg cells of many animals also grow and develop outside their parents. This is called **external development**. Amphibians, birds and fish use external development. Humans use **internal development** and produce fewer offspring than animals using external development because the growing embryos are protected inside the mother.