

# The Teenage BRAIN



Scientists now realise that the teenage brain undergoes a **growth spurt** in the same way as the rest of the teenage body. Just as puberty changes happen, such as facial hair in boys and breasts in girls, so do changes happen in the physical structure and layout of the teenage brain.

## Two main changes happen in the teenage brain:

- 1.** Growth of fatty insulation around the brain connections. This increases the speed of brain messages a hundred-fold.
- 2.** Pruning process in the front of the brain, the part responsible for decision making, planning, emotion control and empathy. This process re-shapes the teenage brain.

This growth spurt also happens in early childhood which explains a great deal! Any parent who has experienced *déjà vu* when faced with teenage tantrums; "You are acting like a two year old!" may not be too far off the mark.

The Terrible Twos and the Traumatic Teens seem to have very similar brain changes.



**SO** ... the next time your children give you 'lip' or blank you with a defiant stare, spare a thought for the work in progress still taking place between the ears!

