



# **BIG IDEAS ABOUT COVID-19**

A year-long series of public discussions  
exploring COVID-19

# Adolescent Brain Development During the Pandemic

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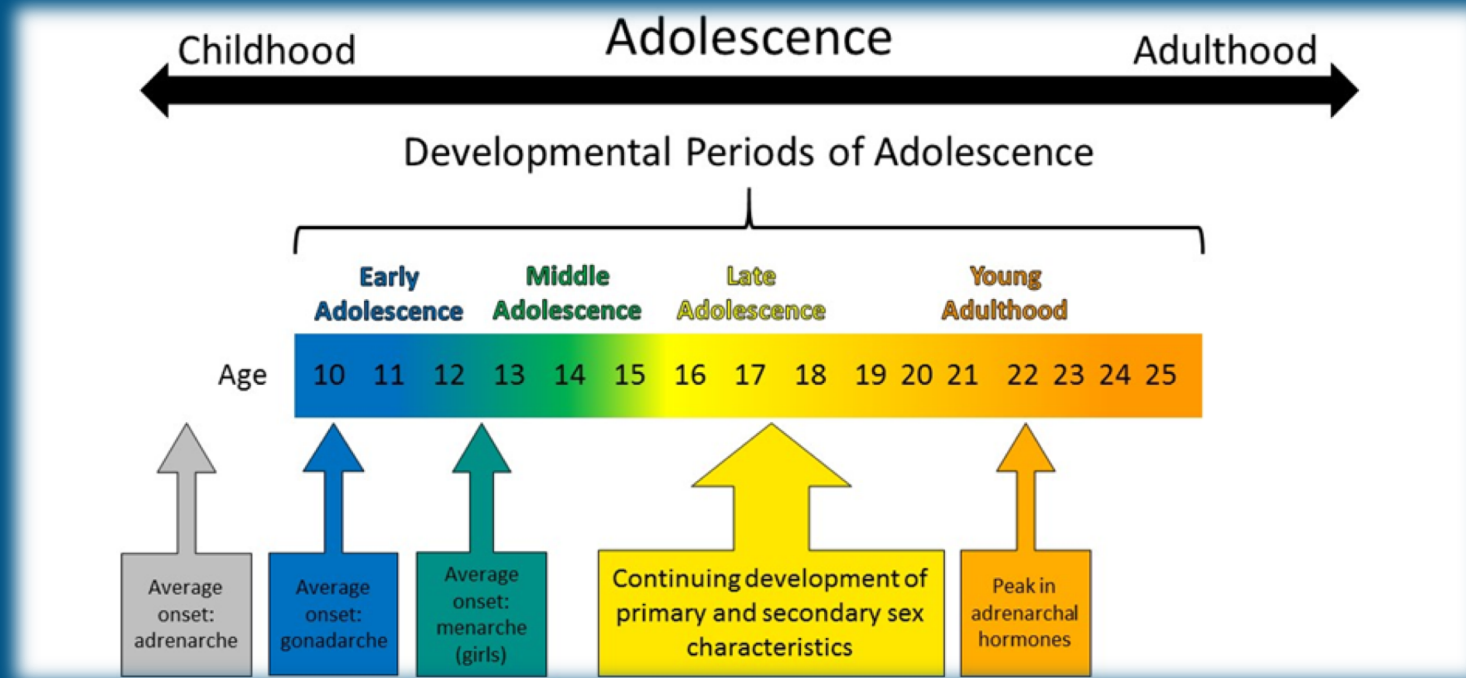
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# Adolescence is a time of remarkable growth and opportunity



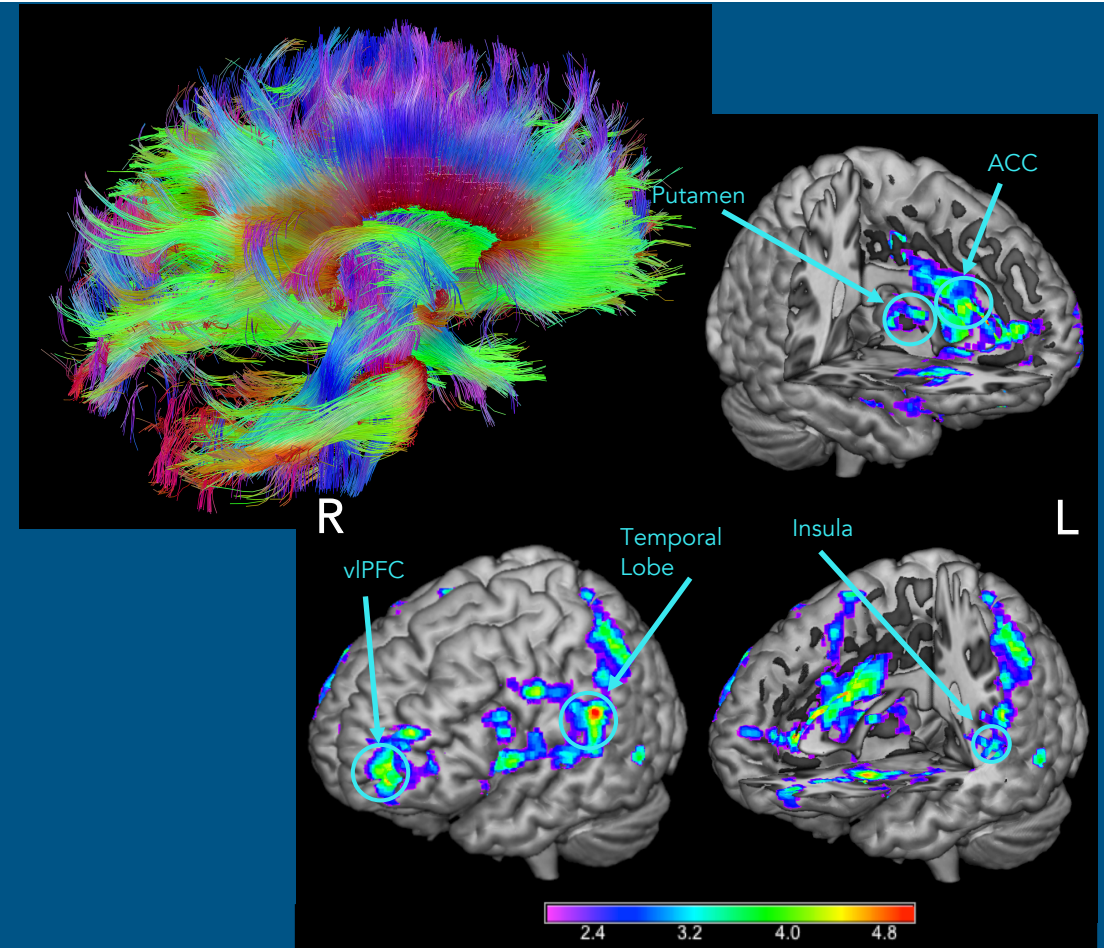
# The major developmental tasks of adolescence

- Adoption of biological, social, and behavioral changes
- Risk-taking and exploration
- Identity formation
- Establishing social relationships



# The adolescent brain is well-suited to these developmental tasks

- Brain Plasticity= heightened sensitivity to environmental input
- Prefrontal cortex development supports cognitive development
- The social brain undergoes massive development
- Motivational systems in the brain are highly engaged





# How has the pandemic influenced adolescent development?

Results are mixed and sometimes contradictory



# How has the pandemic influenced adolescent development?

- Some studies report that depression rates are up but anxiety levels have remained stable, or even decreased
- Other research suggests depression and loneliness were actually lower among teens in summer 2020 than in 2018

# How has the pandemic influenced adolescent development?

- Youth who are suffering most in this pandemic are the kids who were already suffering most
- For all youth, those who feel connected fare better





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# Thank you

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