Reproduction

In humans

MALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

Humans reproduce using sexual reproduction involving a man and a woman.

Testes: The two testes (one is called a testis) are contained in a bag of skin called the scrotum. They have two functions:

- to produce sperm (the male gametes or sex cells)
- to make the hormone testosterone

Sperm duct and Glands: The sperm pass through the sperm ducts, and mix with fluids produced by glands (seminal vesicles). The fluids provide the sperm cells with nutrients. This mixture is called semen.

Penis and Urethra: The penis has two functions:

- to pass urine out of the body from the bladder
- to pass semen into the vagina of a woman during sexual intercourse

The urethra is the tube inside the penis that can carry urine or semen. A ring of muscle ensures that urine and semen do not get mixed up.

THE FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

Ovaries: The two ovaries contain ova (eggs). Ova are the female gametes or sex cells. Women have these cells in their bodies from birth, whereas men produce new sperm continually.

Oviducts: each ovary is connected to the uterus by an oviduct (fallopian tube). The oviduct is lined with ciliated cells. Every month, an ovum (egg) develops and becomes mature, and is released from an ovary. The cilia waft the ovum along inside the oviduct and into the uterus.

Uterus and Cervix: the uterus is a muscular bag with a soft lining. It is where a baby develops until its birth. The cervix is a ring of muscle at the lower end of the uterus. It keeps the baby in place while the woman is pregnant.

Vagina and Urethra: the vagina is a muscular tube that leads from the cervix to the outside of the woman’s body. A man’s penis goes into the woman’s vagina during sexual intercourse. The opening to the vagina has folds of skin called labia that meet to form a vulva.