



# the buzz on fuzz

From razors to laser treatments, depilatory creams to waxes, we've got tons of choices when it comes to saying buh-bye to unwanted body hair. Each technique has its pros and cons; here, we talk to an expert about each method so you can select the one that's right for you.

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## If you opt for the ease of shaving, how should you prep, and what can you do to limit any irritation?

Shaving may be the easiest way to temporarily remove our body hair, but it tends to irritate many skin types and can even cause micro-cuts, says Marilyne Gagné, the president and founder of Dermapure medical-aesthetic clinics. First, she recommends only shaving well-hydrated skin, and to shave in the shower or bath. After you've done a gentle exfoliation in circular motions on the area, apply shaving cream, then use a razor with a sharp blade. Dull blades increase the risk of irritation, nicks and an uneven finish.

## Why is it often said that shaving makes more—and thicker—hair grow back?

It's actually a misperception. "As the razor blade cuts the tip of the hair at 90 degrees, the regrowth appears coarser," explains Gagné. The hair doesn't actually get any thicker than when you wax it, it just grows back with a blunt tip, creating the appearance of thicker hair.

## Waxing helps reduce hair growth. True or false?

"It is true that the strength of the hair decreases over time," says Gagné. The root gets smaller and smaller, and the regrowth gradually thins out. "This is a great option for those who don't want laser treatment," she says. "But it's not permanent; the hairs usually reappear after two to four weeks." It's also important to let the hair grow long enough between sessions to ensure that it can be pulled out from the root.

## What hair removal techniques should you avoid when you have sensitive skin?

Caution is required when using certain waxes and depilatory creams, whose ingredients are sometimes allergenic, warns Gagné. If your skin is irritated or you have a wound, wait for it to heal completely before using any hair removal method. Depilatory creams are not recommended for those who suffer from skin issues like eczema and sensitivity, or skin that reacts to fragrance in products. Always follow the instructions for the product you choose, and do a spot test beforehand to ensure that the formulation won't cause an allergic reaction. According to the pro, you should watch out for redness and blistering and other signs of allergic reaction.

## How can you avoid getting painful ingrown hairs?

Whether you opt for at-home hair removal, like shaving, or a salon treatment, there's always the risk of ingrown hairs. These are hairs that grow below the surface of the skin and can create sore pimples, inflammation or infection, so it's important to prevent them at the source. "Exfoliate your skin two or three times a week," suggests Gagné. However, wait about a week after laser, pulsed light or waxing before picking up the body brush so that the skin has a chance to restore itself.

*We're spoiled for choice when it comes to saying buh-bye to unwanted body hair.*

**What if I'm really afraid of the pain of hair removal techniques?**

While shaving and depilatory creams are popular because they cause little or no discomfort, other hair removal methods can be uncomfortable. The electric epilator, waxing, pulsed light, laser and electrolysis processes require some tolerance to pain. This is especially true with electrolysis, which treats only one hair at a time with an electric current. And while it may be tempting to reach for a numbing cream, Gagné, who works with several doctors and dermatologists in her clinic, says "it's not recommended to use numbing creams on large areas of skin. It's okay if you apply them to a small area of the face, for example, but I don't suggest applying them to both legs. If you do not follow the dosage to the letter, there is a risk of poisoning, hence the importance of always consulting a health-care professional before using them."

**What technique works best to permanently remove hair?**

Excellent results are obtained with laser, intense pulsed light (IPL) and electrolysis. "A qualified professional can recommend a method for you based on a number of factors, such as the colour of your skin and hair and the extent of your body hair," says Gagné. The introduction of longer-wave lasers now makes it possible to safely and effectively treat people with darker skin tones, when the contrast between the colour of the skin and the hair is not high enough for traditional laser or pulsed light treatments to be successful.

**What about over-the-counter pulsed light devices?**

Gagné says it's hit or miss. "Depending on the type of hair, these products can reduce hair growth, much like waxing, but they're generally not powerful enough to completely destroy the hair root," she explains. In short, at-home pulsed light machines are basically less powerful versions of professional laser treatments.

**Are there precautions to take after a laser or pulsed light treatment in a clinic?**

While going through the treatments, exposure to the sun is strictly prohibited, since the risk of sunburn increases tenfold. This is why many people take advantage of the fall and winter seasons to undergo these treatments, then take a break during the summer months. In addition, the procedure should be postponed if you're taking photosensitizing medications to avoid the risk of burns or skin discolouration.



**Our product picks**



**MALIN + GOETZ**  
Ingrown Hair Cream, \$43, malinandgoetz.ca.

**NAIR** Glides Away Sensitive Formula Bikini, Arms & Underarms Hair Removal Cream, \$12, shoppersdrugmart.ca.

**EOS** Jasmine Shave Cream, \$6, amazon.ca.

**FINISHING TOUCH**  
Flawless Electric Shaver, \$100, shoppersdrugmart.ca.

**SOFTEPIL** Epilidou Creamy Warm Wax for Sensitive Skin, \$12, masdelinc.com.

**GLEE** The Body Hair Removal Cream, \$12, walmart.ca.

**SUGAR ME BARE**  
Khepri Firm Sugar Wax, \$35, sugarmebare.ca.

**PHILIPS** Series 8000 Wet & Dry Epilator, \$120, philips.ca.

**ATELIER MAJOR AM**  
Collection Body Scrub, \$40, ateliermajor.com.

**NAIR** Wax-Ready Strips Bikini & Underarm with Nourishing Coconut Milk Oil, \$14.50, well.ca.

**CERAVE**  
Renewal SA Cream, \$26, shoppersdrugmart.ca.

**KARINE JONCAS** Post Hair Removal Intensive Serum, \$40, karinejoncas.ca.

**FUNCTIONALAB** Pre/Post-Treatment Cream 2, \$100, functionalab.com.