

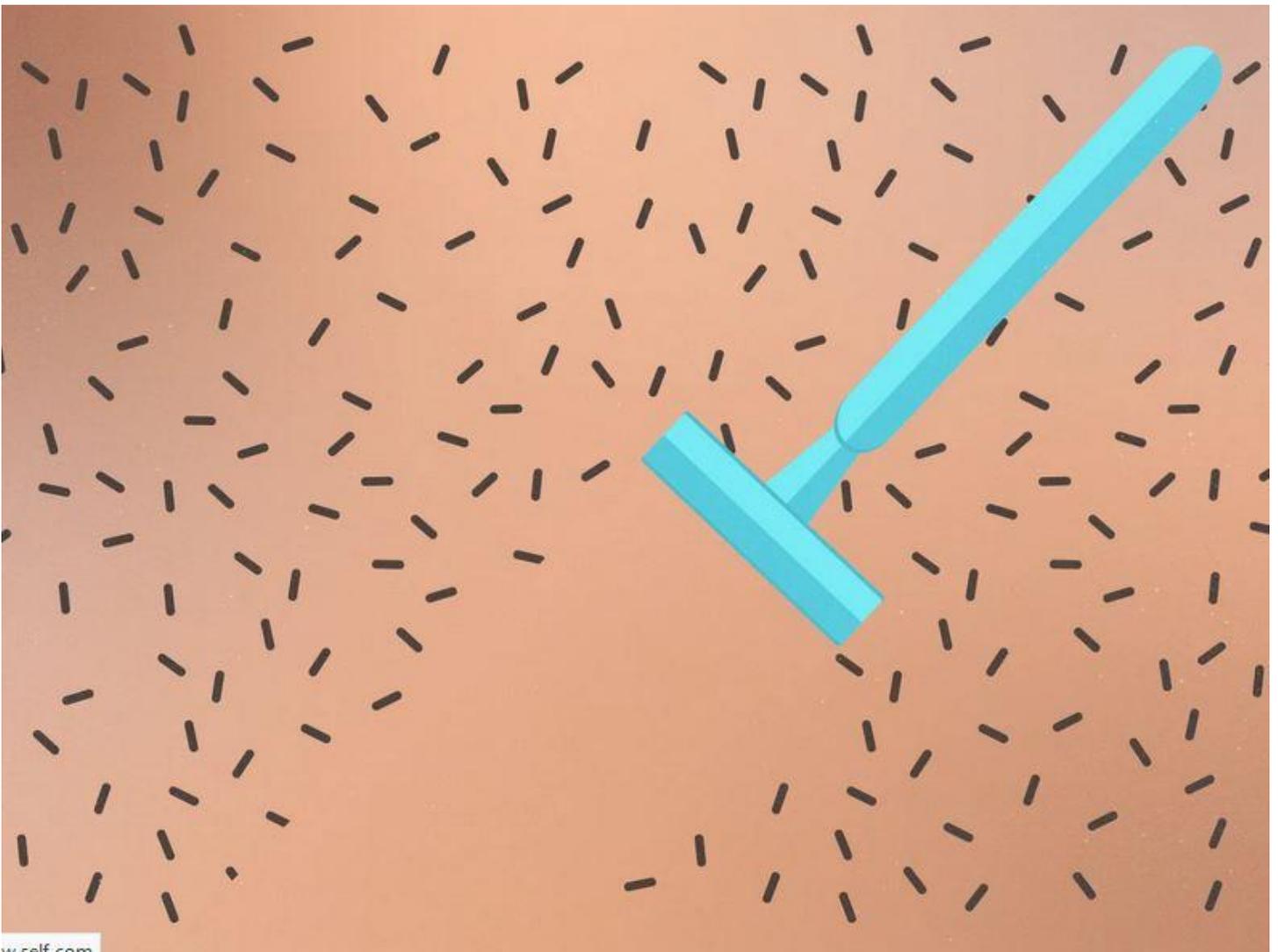
Health | May 21, 2020

Related Condition Centers [Dermatology](#)

## How to Shave Your Pubic Hair, in Case You're Curious

Welcome to the world of DIY hair care.

By [Patia Braithwaite](#)



[wself.com](#)

If the coronavirus pandemic has obliterated your grooming routine, you're not alone. Among many other quandaries, you might be grappling with how to shave your pubic hair these days—particularly if your usual grooming technique isn't really possible while social distancing.

Now, obviously summer's going to look a lot different this year than it normally does, but you might still find some safe opportunities to get into a swimsuit. If removing the hair around your vulva is usually part of that process for you, we get why you're interested in figuring out how to shave down there.

Of course, no one is *obligated* to remove their pubic hair (or any other body hair), but if it's part of your normal routine that makes you feel great, we're not going to tell you to stop. We are, however, going to help you handle this DIY hair care situation as safely as possible. So, in case you're interested in how to shave your pubic hair, we asked a dermatologist to give us the low-down on how to do it safely.

## Why do you even have pubic hair?

It's not entirely clear why people have pubic hair. When it comes to people with vaginas, there is some thought that it might provide protection against dirt entering the vagina, as well as against friction from exercise or sex, SELF previously reported. There is also the (unproven) theory that pubic hair carries pheromones that signal when you have reached reproductive maturity (and, in turn, possibly help you attract a partner to reproduce with). While the research on this is inconclusive at best, the fact is that most people begin to sprout pubic hair when they reach puberty, a phase marked by other hair growth—like armpit hair and facial hair—that can show up in different spots depending on a person's sex, as well as muscle growth, breast development, a deepening voice, and acne, SELF previously reported.

Just because pubic hair is a natural part of human development doesn't mean you're obligated to keep it, just like various pubic hair removal trends don't mean you're obligated to groom it. Whether or not you decide to shave, wax, trim, or simply leave it be is entirely up to you. But since you're reading this, you're probably interested in doing...something to it. And, unlike getting a professional bikini wax or laser hair removal, shaving is something you can do from home.

## The most important part of learning how to shave pubic hair: Know the risks.

At the risk of stating the obvious, shaving involves dragging a sharp object across your skin. So if you aren't intentional about how you do it, you can increase the risk of irritation, cuts, ingrown hairs, and infection. To that end, you absolutely should not grab any old razor and get to work. Instead, make sure you have everything necessary to follow the steps we're about to go through, even if it seems over the top. Hopefully, knowing that there are some risks involved will make following these steps feel more worth it. This is your precious vulva we're talking about, so you need to learn how to shave near your vagina safely before just going to town.

As a baseline, you're going to need body soap and water, a clean razor, shaving cream or gel, and a moisturizer to use when you're finished. Keep reading for our product recommendations.

## Here's how to shave your pubic hair.

"There are certain steps that are important for shaving," **Gary Goldenberg, M.D.**, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital, tells SELF. Many of them are also key if you're shaving other areas like your legs or face, he adds. Here's what to do:

- **Trim first if necessary:** If your pubic hair is a bit long, consider trimming it with scissors before you start shaving. That'll make it easier for the razor to do its job.

- **Use a separate razor for this area, or shave it before other body parts:** Some people have a separate razor for different body parts, but if you don't, Dr. Goldenberg recommends paying attention to the order in which you shave. "I would start [with your pubic hair] so that the razor is the sharpest," Dr. Goldenberg says. Then he suggests moving to other body parts if you shave anywhere else. "Obviously, you have to be careful because the sharper the razor, the easier it is to cut yourself, but a sharper razor does make a difference," he says. That brings us to our next point:
- **Always use a sharp razor:** "The razor has to be as sharp as possible," Dr. Goldenberg says, adding that sharp razors allow you to get a close shave without pressing too firmly on your skin. While many razors have an indicator strip that tells you when the blade is dulling, Dr. Goldenberg says you might need to change your razor more often than the strip would suggest. Instead of worrying about the number of shaves, pay attention to whether the razor "pulls the hairs instead of easily cutting them," he says. When the razor pulls, it stretches hair and skin, which can increase the chance of infection and irritation, Dr. Goldenberg explains. So if it seems like your razor is dragging instead of cutting, it's time to replace it. If you're looking for a new disposable razor, we recommend the Gillette Venus Sensitive Women's Disposable Razor (\$13, Amazon).
- **Start with soap and water:** Begin by making sure that your skin is clean and prepped for shaving. "Wash the area with a little mild soap and warm water," Dr. Goldenberg says. Using warm or hot water will allow for a closer and smoother shave, he explains. Definitely don't dry shave, because that can increase the chances of irritation and nicks.
- **Apply shaving cream:** Opting for a product that is specifically designed for shaving means that it's thick enough to protect your skin from being too irritated by your razor, Dr. Goldenberg says, who says using this type of product is "a must." We like Aveeno Therapeutic Shave Gel (\$4, Amazon).
- **Be gentle:** Though it's tempting to go over the same patch of skin until it's ultrasoft, resist the urge to shave the same spot too many times, and don't shave in the opposite direction of hair growth, the Mayo Clinic says. This can help you prevent cuts and issues like ingrown hairs.
- **Rinse your razor after each stroke:** As you might imagine, a dull razor that's clogged with hair and shaving cream isn't going to be as effective.
- **Then rinse and dry the area:** Dr. Goldenberg suggests rinsing the area with cooler water and patting yourself dry with a clean towel to get rid of excess hair and shaving cream.
- **Don't forget to moisturize:** Finish your shave with the moisturizer of your choice. While Dr. Goldenberg says many of his patients use a moisturizer like coconut oil, "[I don't] love the idea of something very heavy, like oil, because you can occlude pores," he explains. He does add the caveat that if you've used a heavier product that you like, you should feel free to stick with what works. "But if you're shaving for the first time, I would prefer a lighter lotion or a cream just to make sure that you don't get pimples, essentially from occluding the follicles or the pores," he says. We recommend a gentle fragrance-free moisturizer like CeraVe Moisturizing Cream for Normal to Dry Skin (\$16, Amazon) or a product made specifically for post-shave use, like Gillette Venus Bikini Balm (\$10, Amazon).
- **Use products meant to prevent ingrown hairs:** Ingrown hairs happen when hair grows back into the skin instead of out and away from the body, causing inflammation and bumps, the Mayo Clinic explains. This is more likely with coarser hair, which is why ingrown hairs can be so common after shaving your pubic hair. Following the above steps to help prepare the skin for shaving can help cut down on ingrown hairs. Exfoliating regularly with a gentle chemical exfoliant containing ingredients like salicylic acid might also be an option for prevention. You may also have luck with serums that are supposed to prevent ingrown hairs (many of which have those gentle exfoliating acids). We suggest an exfoliant like PFB Vanish + Chromabright (\$32, Dermstore), which has salicylic, glycolic, and lactic acids, or Tend Skin Women's AfterShave/Post Waxing Solution (\$16, Amazon), which contains the anti-inflammatory agent acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin).

## **Above all, take your time when figuring out how to shave down there.**

Don't rush this process. When it comes to becoming a pro at how to shave your pubic hair, taking your time is of the essence. A 2012 article in *Urology* estimated that from 2002 to 2010, there were 11,700 "grooming-related injuries" in the genital area, and researchers confirmed that 385 of those people wound up visiting the emergency room. What's worse? A full 83 percent of the total injuries involved a razor. So at a time where we should all be doing our best to limit non-coronavirus-related medical emergencies, going slowly while grooming is an especially smart idea. But, of course, if you do experience any serious cuts or signs of infection, it's still a good idea to seek medical attention as necessary.