

your Household Helper

KNOW MORE. *save more!*

brought
to you by



The Post and Courier

To subscribe call 853-POST.

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

The hairy truth

Taking a peek
at the plucky
business of the
shorn female
form.

Get a guide to
the workings,
costs
and results
of popular
hair-removal
methods today.

Full story on Page 2.

Making fries
at home:
Method starts
with cold oil
Page 7

Pet Story:
'Not adoptable'
stray loving cat
Page 7



The hairy truth

BY ELLEN MEDER
The Post and Courier

Swim suits, shorts and summer sundresses amount to one thing for women: a constant need to remove body hair in the summer. With such demand during warm months, it's not surprising that the hair-removal market was worth more than \$1.8 billion in 2008, according to Reuters.

Hair-removal products and treatments are numerous, leaving skin silky smooth at best and irritated and inflamed at worst. Some methods are as easy as applying lotions in your home bathroom, while others require trained professionals and approval of the Food and Drug Administration. The decision of how to remove unwanted hair is dependent on how long individuals want to be hair-free, how much they want to pay and, unfortunately, how much pain they can endure.

In the ancient Greek and Roman societies, removing body hair was popular among both genders as it symbolized civilization and cleanliness. However, in the Middle Ages, hair removal fell out of favor, due in part to French Queen Catherine Di Medici of Italy's open disgust for being shorn.

Hair removal began for American women in the 1920s. The fashion industry put women's bodies on display with new sleeveless evening gowns and scandalous knee-length hemlines. A focus on physical improvement permeated advertising campaigns that ran in magazines such as Harper's Bazaar and Ladies Home Journal, and started women down the long and sometimes painful path of hair removal. Here's a guide to the workings, costs and results of popular hair-removal methods today.

Waxing

Waxing is best conducted at a professional salon, such as Stella Nova, where Melinda Isaacson is a senior esthetician. Hot wax is put on the skin and then ripped off with the hair, which Isaacson says is most receptive to waxing if it's thicker and at least a quarter-inch long. At any salon, customers should be sure their esthetician is not double-dipping an applicator in the wax pot once it has touched a client's skin. This will breed bacteria at any heat if contaminated, she said. After-care is essential for avoiding ingrown hairs. Isaacson recommends using Tend Skin, or another product with exfoliating salicylic acid, in combination with Ole Henriksen's all-purpose aloe vera gel to calm the skin. Prices at Stella Nova range from \$15 for the upper lip to \$58 for legs, not including the bikini line.

At home

Walk down the aisle at any drugstore and you'll find an array of hair-removal products. Shaving still is the most popular method of hair removal at home. Regardless of the number of blades on a razor, stubble can appear within a day, but frequent exfoliation will help prevent ingrown hairs and razor burn. Depilatories come in a variety of forms, including liquids, sprays and gels, and work by chemically breaking down the protein structure of hairs. There also are products and gizmos, often seen on late-night infomercials, that claim to leave users hair-free. For most women, it's a trial-and-error process to figure out what works best for them.

Threading

Threading is also an ancient practice that is most popular in India, but Melinda Isaacson uses it at the King Street Stella Nova location. Though it takes technique, the process is simple: A strong, high-quality thread is twisted back on itself and pulls out entire hairs when they get caught in the thread as it is passed over skin. Used only on the face, there are virtually no side effects of threading, though the process has a reputation for being quite painful. Isaacson finds that the technique is a perfect option for clients who take medications such as Retin-A or Accutane that dry the skin. Eyebrow threading starts at \$20, which is comparable to professional facial waxing or tweezing.

Sugaring

Originating in ancient Egypt, sugaring is a effective, lesser-known organic method of hair removal. Christina M. Robertson is a co-founder of a Charleston sugaring studio, Sweet 185. The 14-year esthetician said that once she experienced how painless sugaring is, she knew she would never wax again and couldn't make her clients endure the pain of waxing either.

Here's how sugaring works: A room temperature, semiliquid wad of a sugar, water and lemon juice mixture is pulled over the skin and then flicked up in short sections by a skilled esthetician. The sugar only adheres to dead skin cells and hairs, which are pulled out in the arc of the follicle to prevent breakage and ingrown hairs. Each client gets their own ball of sugar, so the process is sanitary. Robertson says her clients only need to be sugared every three to six weeks and that over repeated visits, hair grows back sparser since the process can create a vacuum in the follicles, closing them off to future growth. Prices range from \$15 for the upper lip to \$120 for legs. Sweet 185's renovated studio at 476 King St. will open by mid-July.

Laser hair removal

Laser hair removal is considered "permanent hair reduction" by the FDA and is a long-term, but not permanent, solution. Trained laser technicians, such as Brantley Cook of Renee Laser and Skin Care Center, remove hair down to the root by carefully exposing quarter-size patches of hair to a laser that is attracted to the dark pigmentation of hair. To get rid of hair in an area, patients typically need four to six treatments at two-month intervals, each of which can last five to 45 minutes depending on the size of the treatment area. Laser hair removal is more effective on short stubble, so Cook asks clients to stop shaving a couple of days before an appointment. Some people describe the process as extremely painful, akin to having hot pins pushed into the skin. Laser treatments also are a little pricey at \$75 for a small area, such as toes, and \$275 for a large area, such as thighs. However, light-colored hair is unaffected by the process, and dark skin with less contrast to the hair can be at risk for burning and require nearly double the laser exposure at lower settings. Because of these risks, some laser centers have to turn away clients with dark skin.