

## Free Guide

# 5 Things that are making your Unwanted Facial Hair WORSE

By Olivia Trevino, LME

I can't count how many times I have seen this client, the woman in her 30's who comes into my office with a mix of emotions, from frustration to hopelessness about hair growth on her chin. This woman has been tweezing, waxing, threading, shaving, etc etc for years. They always tell me the problem started with just a few chin hairs, then over the years has progressed into a small beard of thick, deep, dark and ingrown hairs causing their skin to have a five o'clock shadow look along with thick patches and dark thickened skin beneath the chin with an uneven texture. To say it simply, by the time clients come to us, their skin is a mess and the hair growth is out of control.

Thankfully there is a solution and this is why we Electrologists and Laser Technicians feel so good about what we do.

I'll explain the mechanics of Electrolysis and Laser Hair Removal at the end.

First, we give a short and sweet little talk to our new clients about throwing out the tweezers and stopping all other methods of hair removal except for trimming or shaving in between treatments. Then we can get started with Electrolysis or Laser treatments and begin our journey together to a whole new world of confidence and Freedom from the worry, anxiety, and embarrassment unwanted hair can cause.

Its become very clear to me over the years that the risks of popular hair removal methods are not common knowledge. Here is a breakdown of five commonly used hair removal methods and how they can actually make unwanted facial hair worse.

## **STOP TWEEZING!**

Tweezing removes the hair by pulling it out. When this action takes place on the hair and skin, especially when not done correctly, will lift the skin as it yanks the hair out, causing irritation.

It makes sense that this is the go to method when you first start seeing some crazy chin hairs because its easy and most of us have tweezers in our bathroom, but the truth is, tweezing your chin hair makes it worse.

When you tweeze a hair from your chin, the body creates a stronger, deeper, thicker hair in an attempt to resist the tweezing. The body wants that hair to be there so it fights to keep it.

This isn't the case for eyebrows, but it most definitely will make unwanted chin and upper lip hair growth WORSE.

As the hairs grow in thicker and deeper, they tend to get really ingrown causing the skin to look bumpy and itchy. These hairs often get so thick that they hurt and itch as they are trying to regrow and break through the skin.

Now, think of a dense patch of hair like this along your chin, jawline, or just beneath your chin - its almost impossible to hide. Women suffering from this often carry tweezers in their purses, keep tweezers at work, wake up super early to tweeze before their boyfriends/spouses/significant others wake up because they are so embarrassed. Their friends invite them on a camping trip and they silently panic because the first thing they are thinking about is how to hide this embarrassing problem.

\*If you must tweeze, heres how to do it correctly:

1. Clean your skin first with alcohol, witch hazel, or a gentle cleanser
2. Hold the skin taut with your non-dominant hand
3. Approach the hair with the tweezer in the opposite direction of the hair growth or angle and pull out in the same direction as the hair growth
4. Make sure your tweezers are sharp and have a good grip, Gently and Quickly pull the hair in the direction that the hair is growing.
5. Soothe skin with a nice toner, witch hazel, or a serum with a little salicylic acid if your skin is breakout prone.

## **Waxing:**

Methods of waxing:

Soft Wax is a sticky substance that is applied to your skin and hair. A strip of pellaon or muslin is then applied over the wax, pressed down, and removed, bringing the wax and hairs with it.

Hard wax is a thicker type of wax that is applied to the skin and hair and allowed to cool for a minute, the wax hardens over the hairs and when removed takes the hair with it. Hard wax does not pull on the skin so it is great for sensitive skin

Sugaring is similar in the way it removes the hair.

Waxing will have a similar effect on upper lip and chin hair as tweezing causing the hairs to eventually grow in thicker, deeper, and eventually become ingrown all of which emphasize the problem.

Waxing can be great for other areas of the body ( so long as you aren't prone to ingrown hairs) - eyebrows, legs, bikini, but you must RESIST waxing your chin or upper lip!

For some, waxing just isn't a good option on the body because it causes their hair to become ingrown. In cases where bikini hair, for example, is quite dense and coarse, waxing is likely to cause ingrown hair which can become itchy, painful, and sometimes, infected. If this sounds like you, then Electrolysis or Laser Hair Removal are the best options for you.

The other downside to waxing is that you will have to do it forever. It may seem that your hair is thinning out after a few waxes, but it's actually not. The reason your hair appears to be thinner when waxing is because you are waxing different growth cycles. It takes 8 - 12 weeks for a hair to regrow so if you are waxing every 4 - 6 weeks, you are not waxing the same hair growth cycle each time. We have many hair growth cycles working their way to the surface at all times.

If you must Wax PLEASE, I BEG YOU, GO A PROFESSIONAL. LET OUR ESTHETICIANS TAKE CARE OF YOU. There just is no real good way to wax yourself.

### **Shaving:**

Let start with how shaving works - it cuts the hair off at the surface of your skin. This does make the hair less noticeable, but when you look closely, you can still see the hair just below the skin's surface. Shaving isn't great for chin hair as the only method as it will leave you with a 5 o'clock shadow and can turn your light peach fuzz into stubble.

Shaving unwanted chin hair can lead to some of the same anxieties as tweezing. Clients who choose to shave their chin often carry extra razors in their purses, keep them at work, and have a strict schedule of shaving throughout the day trying to avoid that 5 o'clock shadow.

Another thing that we often see with those who shave is that they use a thick layer of concealer to cover up the 5 o'clock shadow making the skin look slightly grayish, not to mention the effects of putting thick makeup over freshly shaved skin! Here we go with the irritation again! Shaving just isn't a successful method of masking unwanted facial hair growth.

If you must shave, treat your skin well. Use a nice sensitive skin shaving cream during the process and follow it up with a great moisturizer, hydrating serum, and definitely use sunscreen. Sunscreen will help shield your skin from the heavy make up.

If you are prone to breakouts or have generally oily skin, I strongly recommend using a serum with salicylic acid to keep breakouts at bay.

## **Depilatories** ( such as Nair).

Two words: Chemical Burn.

Depilatories use a chemical called thioglycolate mixed with sodium hydroxide or calcium hydroxide to literally melt or dissolve the hair. The way these chemicals work is by dissolving the chemical bonds that hold your hair and skin cells together. The bonds that hold hair cells together contain more of the protein cystine that do the bonds that hold skin cells together ( to make it simple).

Thioglycolate is more effective on the bonds that contain cystine which is why it works to dissolve the hair and not the skin, however, it is quite damaging to your skin cells because it does have some effect. The major side effect of depilatories is irritated skin, and if left on even slightly too long, can cause a chemical burn.

The way it works is by applying the cream the the area of unwanted hair, leaving it on for 3 - 15 minutes, then wiping off. The chemical dissolves the hair into a jelly like substance so its fairly easy to wash off. Make sure to clean skin thoroughly before and after and also consider applying hydrocortisone to the area afterwards to help with the irritation.

Depilatories are stinky and its just not a good idea to use such strong chemicals on your skin. I have seen more chemical burns from nair than I can count. It looks like a burn and it hurts and there is nothing you can do about it once it happens. The chemical burn from a depilatory cream is literally dissolving the natural bonds that hold your skin cells together. In simple terms - it can melt your skin off. Scary stuff!

## **Epilators**

EEEEK!!!! Talk about torturing yourself!!!!!! Can we say painful????!!

`An Epilator is a hair removal tool that is shaped like a large razor and you use it the same way you would a razor except for you want your skin dry and exfoliated prior to using. Epilators are usually battery powered and have several speed settings. The way it works is by pulling out your hair in the same way a tweezer does, except much faster and many hairs at once.

I caution against these painful little contraptions for two main reasons ( besides the pain factor),

1. There is a increased risk of ingrown hairs. You can be almost certain that you will get some Ingrown hairs. This is in part because when it pulls the hair, it will also pull on the skin.

2. Your skin will be bright red and irritated no matter how clean and exfoliated your skin is, it will look and feel as if you did a dry shave. i.e. similar to razor burn

Some people like this method of hair removal because it does last a couple of weeks, however, the side effect of irritated skin will last at least a day, ingrown hairs can lead to hyperpigmentation, and its quite a slow and painful process.

If you must do this - do it right: 1. Make sure your skin is clean, exfoliated, and dry. 2. Hold your skin taut as you move the epilator. 3. Move slowly. 4. Clean and protect your skin once you are done.

Waxing is a much better option than an epilator for legs, arms, and other areas of the body. DO not attempt to use an epilator on your face. You will look like you have razor burn and your hairs will most definitely become ingrown.

***Now let's talk about the more permanent options that are safe and actually work:***

### **Laser Hair Removal**

Laser hair removal is really hair reduction. No one can legally claim that a laser will permanently remove 100% of your unwanted hair for good. It does, however, reduce hair by about 90% for some and 50% for others, which makes it much more manageable. For some, the laser treatments keep the hair away for good, others are hair free for 5 years or so before they see regrowth and others have no change. There is also the 5% that experience the worst side effect - stimulated hair growth.

I suggest laser hair removal for the body, particularly the legs, back, an extensive thick bikini line, and thick, dark underarm hair.

The other important thing to note about laser hair removal is that it is really only effective on brown or black hair. It can be done on all shades of skin so long as the hair is darker than the skin.

My favorite and preferred method of Laser Hair Removal is actually not a true laser; it is an Intense Pulsed Light (IPL). Some Lasers use AFT technology which is very similar to IPL but more efficient in its use of light. What this means for you is that it hurts less. Your laser tech can apply this heat and energy to the skin using one of two methods and the hand piece is chilled to feel like an ice cube. All of these modalities are there to make the process more comfortable. In my opinion, laser hair removal done with this method feels like a slight prickly heat and I have almost fallen asleep during a treatment. Its really not painful and its FAST! Fast is always good!

To perform light-based hair removal, a large rectangular window emitting broad-spectrum light is applied to the surface of the skin. The energy travels harmlessly through the epidermis and dermis until it strikes the hair follicle, which contains a dense, melanin-rich hair shaft and bulb. The dark-colored melanin absorbs the light and rises quickly in temperature, destroying the hair-producing cells surrounding the follicle. Because the heat is not sustained, however, no damage occurs outside the follicle area.

**Now for that Explanation of how Electrolysis works.**

***Here is everything you need to know about electrolysis:***

Electrolysis is the only method *approved by the FDA* for permanent removal of unwanted hair. Regardless of the cause - heredity, metabolic, or hormonal conditions - electrolysis will permanently remove unwanted hair to reveal a glowing, smooth skin, and a more confident you.

- Electrolysis is effective for all skin types, hair types, skin colors, hair colors, and areas of the body.

- As the hair is treated, regrowth is prevented rather than just removed temporarily. Electrolysis is the ONLY method that provides both hair removal and permanent hair elimination.

- Electrolysis must be done in a series to treat all growth cycles and temporary regrowth. As we treat the follicles, some will stop producing a hair immediately, while others will regrow a weaker, finer hair until it is treated enough times to completely stop the growth.

The way Electrolysis works is quite simple; a small electric current is transmitted by a fine, sterile tiny probe directly into the natural opening of the hair follicle, destroying the dermal papilla, the matrix, and an area called "the bulge", all of which cause hair to grow and regenerate. In other words, the electrical current destroys the hair follicle rendering it unable to produce a hair.

There are three types of electrolysis used today :

1. Galvanic. Direct Current (DC) is applied to follicle. The DC causes a chemical reaction to happen within the skin which causes the breakdown of the salt and water molecules that are

naturally in our skin. When these molecules breakdown, they reform and produce sodium hydroxide (lye) within the hair follicle. Lye is caustic to the follicle. When electrolysis is done well, your technician will make sure not to allow the lye to reach the surface of the skin which can cause mild irritation.

2. Thermolysis. Alternating Current ( AC ) is used to cauterize the follicle using heat.

3. The Blend Method. This method combines both Galvanic ( AC) and Thermolysis (DC) current and is very effective in eliminating hair growth.

I personally prefer the Blend Method. My machines are able to perform any of the above methods of electrolysis, but we rarely use just one current at a time. Why use just one when you can use both???

Immediately following an electrolysis treatment, there may be temporary redness and/or the skin can be tender to the touch, which varies with each individual. We also give you plenty of instructions and information about aftercare.

Worst case scenario with Electrolysis is pin point scabbing or bruising. Neither of these leave any permanent marks on the skin.

If Electrolysis is done incorrectly can cause blistering which can result in pitting so its good to use a free consultation as a way to “interview” your electrologist. I do not suggest going to someone who is doing this service out of their home because they are more likely to not be following proper standards to cleanliness and they can often fall under the radar of the local city departments that regulate cleanliness and sterilization.

**The Fastest and Most Effective Route to Permanently Get Rid of Unwanted Hair (and gain smooth, glowing, rejuvenated skin) is to use Laser Hair Removal and/or Electrolysis or a combination of both treatments.**