

Waxing Information Sheet

What are ingrown hairs?

Ingrown hairs are caused when the hair is unable to grow unhindered along its natural channel through your skin called the hair follicle.

This problem can affect any hair but it is most likely when the hair has been cut into a blunt thick angle by shaving or broken by careless tweezing. Other factors that increase the likelihood in ingrown hairs even in waxed hair.

Type of hair

Pubic hairs are particularly thick and often curly, this can predispose them to becoming trapped under your skin.

Friction and pressure

In areas where there is pressure or friction on your skin it makes it more difficult for the hairs to take their natural path and increases the risk of getting stuck.

This is most commonly seen in the pubic region where knicker elastic rubs your groin or around the waist band where we all have a little role of skin.

Dry dehydrated skin

Dry and dehydrated skin loses its elasticity and is more likely to obstruct the passage of new hair growth resulting in ingrown hairs.

Dead skin fragments can also block the follicle, exasperating the problem. Very oily skin prone to blackheads can also result in blocked follicles.

Skin Reactivity

Sometimes our skin does not react, other times we will get a full-on inflammatory response. Factors like hay fever, diet and menstrual cycle will also affect our skin's sensitivity.

Stages of ingrown hairs

Stage 1

These are when the hairs grow out of the follicle but are stopped from emerging by a fine layer of outer skin. These can often be seen as lines under the skin and they may be accompanied by a small red dot. Stage one ingrowns are often not associated with any particular inflammation, yet.

These ingrowns can often be removed from the skin by exfoliation to remove the outer layer of dead skin. Remember the outer layer skin naturally sheds exposing and releasing the hair over time.

Stage Two

If left untreated from stage one, the tip of the hair continues to grow, but instead of outwards, curl back into our skin. If caught early enough when the hair follicle is still open Ross may be able to hook the hair out. If successful it can be removed before it progresses causing further problems. Ross uses a special tool, together with additional training to prevent further skin damage.

Stage Three

This involves the increasing local blood supply causing redness and heat, walling with scar tissue and sending white blood cells to the attack. It's these dead white blood cells that cause pus. Eventually an abscess with a head will develop.

Patience is required once the hair follicle is walled off. Usually the abscess will come to a head and burst. Then the offending hair can be excavated by a trained person. Squeezing and poking at the spot may be irresistible but unlikely to remove the underlying hair and causes darkened scars that take ages to disappear.

Prevention of Ingrown Hairs

Method of Hair Removal

Waxing is better than close shaving. With waxing the hairs are removed with their roots resulting in prolonged hair free time. However with close shaving a thick flat profile to the hair end is left, this is much more difficult to get through the follicle, than the soft tipped hair regrowth from waxing. Waxing also lasts much, much longer. So by the simple probability, if hairs need to grow through the skin less often, there will be a significantly reduced likelihood of ingrown hairs.

Reduction of Friction and Sweat.

Ingrown hairs are almost exclusively seen where clothes or rolls of skin rub our skin. Pressure on your skin simply makes it more difficult for the hair to grow straight out. Be super mindful of rubbing or tight pants and leggings. Swapping the STYLE of your underwear daily will prevent continuous rubbing in the same place day after day. No pants is a great option where practical too. Watch out for the tight waistbands on jeans or very fitted leggings. A little talc can really help reduce friction and sweating too.

Keep your Skin Supple and Hydrated.

If your skin is dehydrated and dry it will be more difficult for the hairs to pass through. Staying hydrated helps maintain general optimum health and is as simple as drinking lots of water. Treat your skin daily with moisturiser or body oil after a shower and before bed.

Regular Exfoliation.

Exfoliation helps clear the hair follicles of dead skin, debris and releases stage one ingrown hairs directly.

Scrubs contain grains of sugar or salt in a base. They can be used during your shower at least twice a week. I use RuffStuff, it works really well and has a coconut oil base. It leaves your skin feeling smooth and soft adding a moisturiser too.

Scrub Cloth or Mitts are also used alongside soap while showering. I use A Bit of Rough scrub cloth. It's my preferred choice for larger areas like legs and back, being long lasting washable and big enough to reach across my shoulders. You will still need to moisturise well after your shower too.

Chemical exfoliants, most of these contain the acne treatment Salicylic acid used to unplug skin pores. However, salicylic acid can dry your skin and strip the natural oils. So I use a roll-on containing Betaine Salicylate. It also helps hairs grow back finer and lightens dark scarring caused by proper stage three ingrown craters too.

Help is at Hand

Ross is fully trained and certified by industry leaders in Waxology, 'Wax Daddy' Andy Rouillard, 'The Waxing Guru' Samantha Marshall and 'IngrownOut' Sarah Louisa using beautiful equipment and products by Ashmira Botanica, Jack Dunn and Expert Waxes.

So book in with Ross for specific, individual advice. The best products and removal of those pesky ingrown hairs too.