Hey Alice,

How is it that all the guys I see in magazines and on TV have these perfectly hairless bodies? Most of us are not born with a smooth back, legs, and butt. What is it they use?

Hairy and curious

Answer

Dear Hairy and curious,

Just as you?ve mentioned, most people aren't born with completely hairless bodies. In fact, most people only get hairier after puberty. The hairless models you're seeing could be using a variety methods to actually remove the hair or the image may have been edited or altered to make them appear smooth and silky. If you're considering that hairless look, you may want to start with temporary methods to make sure you like the look on yourself.

There are a number of hair removal options they could be using, some of which are temporary and others that are permanent. Temporary options include shaving (by far the most popular method), waxing, depilatory creams, tweezing, and trimming. If going this route, it's best to use a light hand and keep antibiotic ointment close by to treat any nicks or bumps. For a long-term solution, some people opt for the more permanent laser hair removal. Although costly, this option works by killing hair follicles with the use of a laser beam that has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for that purpose. If a more permanent method is chosen, it's best to consult with a health care provider, particularly a dermatologist.

Other helpful information to keep in mind include:

- Abrasions, cuts, and rashes from hair removal increase susceptibility to infections. So, for extremely sensitive areas such as the genitals, anus, and nipples, it's a good idea to ask a health care provider for advice.
- For do-it-yourself hair removal, try taking it slow and start by experimenting with the back of the neck, chest, buttocks, back, toes, and knuckles to get the hang of it.

Not to split hairs, but it's worth mentioning that body hair serves many purposes, including protection from the cold, cushioning, and physical expression of sexual maturity. Body hair's significance also varies from culture to culture and keeping or removing it may be subject to personal preference and trends as well (with pubic hair being just one example). With that in
mind, you might consider taking a critical lens to these images and ask yourself about what messages they’re sending, such as the relationship between body hair and desirability or even hygiene. In what ways do these messages influence positive or negative perspectives regarding body hair (or not) for you? Are the messages based in reality and fact? Thinking through these may shed a bit more light on what’s plucking at your curiosity. Whether you’d like to embrace your fuzz or experiment with temporary hair removal, go with your gut and do what’s best for you (and your wallet). If you do go bare and don’t like the results, don’t sweat it? it’ll grow back.

Hope this helps!

Alice!

Category:
General Health [5]
Hair [6]

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To shave or not to shave [7]
My hairless face is holding me back? I look too young! [8]
Brazilian waxing [9]

Resources

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Medical Services (CUMC) [11]
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