



# PureWow

## How to Get Rid of an Ingrown Hair, According to a Dermatologist

By Alexia Dellner | July 2, 2019



You're getting ready for a beach vacay, so you go ahead and give yourself a little grooming down below. And all seems well—until the next day, when you're met with angry, inflamed bumps along your bikini line. Welp, that's not exactly the look you were going for. We tapped board-certified dermatologist and celebrity beauty expert [Dr. Anna Guanche](#) for her top tips for how to get rid of those pesky ingrown hairs (and how to prevent them from happening in the first place).

First, what causes ingrown hairs?

“Ingrown hairs occur when a hair starts to grow in the hair follicle and is blocked by skin debris or epithelium [a type of tissue] that has grown over the top of the pore, causing the hair to not grow straight and instead sideways,” explains Dr. Guanche. This often happens after shaving or plucking the hair. “The hair then creates an inflammatory reaction, redness and sometimes concurrent blockage of the pore and then bacteria come in as opportunists.” Cue those irritating bumps. But even if you choose to rock a natural, '70s vibe, you still might experience ingrowns on occasion. That’s because friction (like a tight pair of pants), sweat (say, your evening Bikram class) and hair texture (thanks, Mom) can still cause ingrown hairs to appear seemingly out of nowhere. But don’t fret—there is a way to speed up the healing process.

How to get rid of an ingrown hair



Step one: Exfoliate. "When you exfoliate an area where there are ingrown hairs, this helps to remove dead skin cells and dirt, which could be clogging the pores and influencing the hair to grow in a direction other than straight," says Dr. Guanche. "Also, exfoliation prevents epithelium from encroaching over the opening of the pore, which can lead to this problem." We like using a treatment that's effective yet gentle—here are seven exfoliators great for sensitive skin.

Step two: Apply product. To soothe an ingrown hair, give it a little TLC. "Mix a drop of oxymetazoline (the active ingredient in Visine) with your normal moisturizer and apply one drop onto the ingrown hair to reduce redness and inflammation," advises Dr. Guanche. "Oxymetazoline narrows blood vessels and takes the red out." Don't have any Visine lying around? A dab of antibiotic ointment (like Neosporin) can also help. But if redness forms around the ingrown hair or it starts to ooze with pus and becomes tender, visit your dermatologist, stat.

Step three: Prevent them for next time. Defense is the best offense. That means exfoliating regularly (at least once a week) and if you are going to shave, never use a dull or dirty blade. And remember, always use shaving cream and shave in the same direction as the hair.

One last thing...

It might be tempting to try and pick that sucker out yourself, but please don't. Squeezing an ingrown hair might push it deeper into the skin, which can send bacteria into the pores and cause an infection. You're better off trying the methods above or reaching out to a professional.

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