# **Trimming pubic hair 'increases risk of STIs'**

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People who regularly remove or trim their pubic hair are more likely to catch [sexually transmitted infections](http://www.standard.co.uk/topic/sexual-health), research has found.

Doctors claim small cuts in the skin from shaving or trimming could make it easier for infections such as herpes and HPV to spread.

Those who groom their pubic hair tend to be more sexually active and have more sexual partners, a survey of more than 7,500 [American](http://www.standard.co.uk/topic/america) adults found.

A report, published in BMJ journal, Sexually Transmitted Infections, said small cuts in the skin were the most likely explanation for STIs linked to grooming.

Doctors advised both men and women to groom themselves less frequently or put off having sex until any cuts had healed.

The report also found that men were most likely to use an electric razor whereas women were most likely to use a manual one.

One in five men and women used scissors.

Researchers said it was unlikely that sharing grooming tools was an issue, because traces of the most common STIs had not been found on objects before.

STIs are passed on through unprotected sex or genital contact.

Three-quarters of people surveyed said they had groomed their pubic hair before.

Some 84 per cent of women and 66 per cent of men said they had trimmed, shaved or waxed in the past.

Around 17 per cent of respondents described themselves as "extreme groomers" – who removed all hair at least once a month.

And 22 per cent admitted to "high frequency" trimming - meaning they carried out their routine daily or weekly.

The survey found those with the most extreme habits were three to four times more likely to contract an STI, particularly infections from skin to skin contact such as herpes.

But trimming and shaving was also found to protect against pubic lice.

The report said: "If grooming is found to protect against lice, individuals at risk for pubic lice could be counselled to remove their pubic hair."