# **Hair raising – the​ health​ dangers of​ bikini waxing**

A study has shown that if you shave or wax your pubic hair, you increase your risk of catching an STD by 400%

Tuesday 6 December 2016 12.09 GMTLast modified on Friday 9 December 2016 17.25 GMT

**Name:** The bikini wax.

**Age:** Almost as old as the bikini, invented 70 years ago.

**Appearance:** Smooth and clean, all the better to see your diseases with.

**That came out of nowhere.** Sorry, but it’s true. If you shave or wax your pubic hair, you increase your risk of catching a sexually transmitted disease by 400%.

**Nonsense.** It was published in a respected medical journal. Are you telling me you don’t have a subscription to Sexually Transmitted Infections?

**Um, no.** Well, if you did, you’d know about [the study undertaken by researchers at San Francisco general hospital](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-38207594). They looked at 7,500 people and found that “extreme groomers” – those who completely waved or shaved their pubic area once a month – were four times more likely than others to become infected.

**Why?** There are three main theories. The first is that constant waxing might cause minuscule tears in the skin, which could increase your chance of catching disease.

**OK.** The second is that grooming equipment might be shared between a number of people, which obviously carries a greater risk of infection.

**And the third?** The third is that people with nice-looking pubic areas get more sex.

**Are you picking on promiscuous women?** No, no, the study was carried out across all genders. If you’re man, you’re also much less likely to catch an STD if your genitals look like a Cadbury’s Mini Egg hiding in a hedgerow.

**Really? That’s how you avoid sexually transmitted diseases? Make sure your groin looks like you rubbed it with a Pritt Stick and then rolled it around on a hairdresser’s floor?** Well, no, obviously. The best way to avoid STDs is to use a condom and get tested regularly.

**But hairiness is still the way to go?** It depends. Do you enjoy looking as if you haven’t hit puberty?

**Yuck, no!** Then don’t wax. But be warned: [not waxing carries its own risks](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/jul/11/should-groom-pubic-hair-shaving-trimming).

**It does?** If you have pubic hair, you’re more likely to get pubic lice and all the itching and bleeding that can cause.

**So my choices are limited to sexually transmitted disease or lice?** Yep. Welcome to 2016.

**Do say:** “Really, everyone is at risk unless they take proper precautions.”

**Don’t say:** “Speak for yourselves, I’m physically repellent.”