



[Authoritative facts](#) about the skin from the [New Zealand Dermatological Society Incorporated](#).

[Home](#) | [Procedures](#)

Epilation

Epilation is the term used to describe removal of body hair, including the hair root, by means of mechanical device, tweezer, or wax. It is the most effective method for temporarily removing hair. [Waxing](#) is the most effective method of epilation because it removes hair completely from the hair shaft in large quantities.

Epilation methods

There are several other epilation methods in addition to waxing.

Plucking

Plucking is performed using hand-held or electrical tweezers. Hand-held tweezers are best used for removing the occasional coarse hair or a small group of hairs, such as those found on the eyebrows, chin or nipples. Electrical tweezers including the Epilady® range of products are designed to remove unwanted hair from both small and large areas. Some of these products are dual action epilators and both pluck and shave at the same time.

Threading

Threading is an ancient method of hair removal still used in many countries in the Middle East and India. The technique involves a long loop of cotton thread that is twisted and rolled along the surface of the skin. Hair is caught within the entwined coils and pulled from their roots as the thread rolls along.

It is used to give clean lines and is good for shaping eyebrows and removing hair from the upper lip and other facial areas. It is considered to be less painful than plucking, waxing and sugaring.

Abrasives

These work by physically rubbing away hair from the skin surface. Abrasives used include pumice stones and devices or gloves made from fine sandpaper. This method is irritating to the skin and is seldom used these days.

Sugaring

Sugaring is similar to waxing but instead of using wax a sugar mixture is used. The sugar mixture is made up of sugar, lemon juice and water heated together to form a paste. Like waxing, a thin layer of sugar paste is applied to the skin and a cotton strip placed on top. The strip is then pulled back sharply against the direction of the hair growth. Sugaring is a suitable alternative to waxing for people sensitive to wax.

Side effects

Side effects from epilation include:

- pain
- [folliculitis](#)
- scarring
- [hyperpigmentation](#)
- ingrown hair ([pseudofolliculitis](#))

Related information

References:

On DermNet NZ:

- [Procedures to treat the skin](#)
- [Electrolysis](#)
- [Hair removal techniques](#)

Other websites:

- [Nonlaser Hair Removal Techniques - from emedicine dermatology, the online textbook](#)

Books about skin diseases:

See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](#)

Author: Vanessa Ngan, staff writer

DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service.
If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a [dermatologist](#) for advice.

Created 2005. Last updated 26 Dec 2006. © 2007 NZDS. Disclaimer.