

Teaching a Young Woman to Shave

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It is culturally encouraged in most communities in the United State that young women keep their legs and underarms free of hair. Therefore, shaving becomes a routine activity for many. However, when preparing to shave, there are many options to consider. You will want to think about the different types of razors available, supplies that are needed, best time of day to shave and how that fits into a daily schedule, and what to do if there is an accidental cut from the razor. The information below is written for a young woman to read prior to shaving for the first time.

How to Shave Your Legs

If it is time to learn to shave, first, decide the type of razor you want to use. The choices are: an electric razor, a non-electric razor with replacement blades, or a disposable non-electric razor. Depilatory creams are available as well. Second, based on the type of razor you have selected, purchase items that you will need from the list below. The directions for shaving will be different depending on the type of razor you have chosen. Directions for shaving are also listed below. Last and very important, check with a family member/caregiver for advice and guidance as you go through this process until you are comfortable shaving by yourself.

Shaving Using Either Disposable Razors or Razors with Disposable Blades

Things You Will Need:

- Towel
- Disposable razor
- Shaving cream or gel
- Moisturizer for after shaving

Instructions: Read First Before Starting to Shave

____ Rinse your legs in warm water for about 10 minutes (e.g., bath or shower).

- ___ Think of your leg in three parts: Lower part is below the knee, upper part is above the knee, and the knee. It is easiest when you first start to shave to sit on the edge of a bathtub with your legs inside the tub near the facet.
- ___ Apply shaving cream evenly, covering the front and back of your leg.
- ___ Put razor on your leg with edge of blade next to skin, pressing lightly in an upward motion towards your knee (i.e., shave in the direction against hair growth). Use short smooth strokes.
- ___ Lift your razor an inch above the skin between strokes to avoid cuts.
- ___ Rinse the razor under the tub facet to get rid of hair caught in the blades.
- ___ Move the razor to the edge of the shaving cream. Repeat steps until you have your lower leg completely shaven. You can tell if you have shaven your leg well because it will feel smooth and you will see no hair.
- ___ Continue the same method for the upper part of your leg. Some girls only shave the lower half of their upper leg and some shave the entire area. Ask your caregiver what she does.
- ___ Remember to rinse the razor under the tub facet after each stroke to get rid of the hair stuck in the razor.
- ___ When shaving your knee, it is best to straighten your leg so your knee will be as smooth as possible. Continue to use an upward motion with the razor. Being careful to pick the razor up off your knee before taking another stroke.
- ___ When finished, wash both of your legs and apply moisturizer.
- ___ Rinse razor blade and put away in safe area.

Remember, as you are learning how to shave, you will make mistakes. This is part of the learning process. You may nick yourself shaving. If this occurs, stop shaving to take care of the bleeding with a tissue. The first time you shave, you may miss some hairy spots. This is common as you learn to shave your legs. Each time you shave, try your best to use the razor to remove all of the unwanted hair on your legs.

Shaving with an Electric Razor

Items Needed:

- Wash cloth and soap
- Towel
- Electric razor
- Spare blades and screens for razor

- Moisturizer for after shaving legs

Instructions: Read First Before Starting to Shave

- ___ Before you shave, wash your legs with warm water. This makes the hair removal easier. Dry with towel. Skin needs to be dry before you shave with an electric razor.
- ___ Shave in the opposite direction from the hair growth. Do not go over the same spots repeatedly. This will cause skin irritation and razor burn.
- ___ To shave your knee, straighten your leg. Pull the skin taut above the knee, to make the skin smoother when shaving.
- ___ When finished, gently rub your hand over your leg. If your leg feels smooth all over, you are done shaving. If you feel a rough area, you need to shave that area again.
- ___ Wash legs and apply moisturizer.
- ___ Clean razor.

If you have special sensory needs or challenges, you might want to slowly begin desensitizing yourself to this process. You might also find that certain types of razors are better suited for your sensory needs. For example, an electric razor may make a sound that is painful and distracting for you to hear. If that is the case, then try using a non-electric razor. Just remember that proper hygiene is an important part of life. Additional information on shaving tips can be found at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sf6q25u_nac

http://www.bicworld.com/files/pdfs/doc_shaving_tips_en.pdf

http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_body/skin_stuff/hair_removal.html

Using Depilatories (Cream or Liquid)

Depilatories are a cream or liquid that removes hair from the skin's surface. The hair dissolves and can be washed or wiped away. This method lasts several days to two weeks. It works quickly and is easy to use around areas of the body with curves (e.g., knees and ankles). Be sure to follow the label instructions specifically. It is important to try the product on a small section of your leg. Follow the directions for this small section of your leg. Wait 24 hours to see if the area is not red or stinging. If it is okay, then apply the depilatory cream to the entire leg as stated on the directions on the can. Applying depilatories can be messy and many people dislike the odor. If you have sensitive skin, you might have an allergic

reaction to the chemicals which may cause a rash or inflammation. Depilatories may not be as effective on people with coarse hair.

Shaving Underarms

When shaving underarms, many women use an electric razor, a non-electric razor with replacement blades, a disposable non-electric razor, or a depilatory (cream). Refer to this website for helpful information on how to specifically shave your underarms <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEyLOZktchE>.

Overall Tips

- Change the blade or switch to a new razor about once a week to avoid using a dull razor. A dull razor can cut you easily or cause a rash.
- Some women prefer a razor specifically designed for girls; others prefer a man's disposable razor. This is a personal preference.
- Whether you're shaving your legs or armpits, go slowly. These are curvy areas of your body with lots of angles which can be tricky to shave. It can be easy to cut yourself if you move too fast.
- Before releasing the blade from the handle, be sure to notice which way the blade was placed so you can put the new blade in correctly.
- Some women shave their legs and underarms daily, some weekly, and some monthly. This is an individual decision and should be guided by the amount of hair you are comfortable having under your arms and on your legs, and how fast the hair grows.
- Do not shave when skin is irritated, sunburned, or you have broken skin.
- If you're nervous about cutting yourself with a disposable razor, you can try an electric razor or depilatory instead.
- Remembering where you have shaven your legs is difficult to see if your hair is blonde or just starting to grow. Try using Crayola bathtub crayons to draw straight lines down your leg about an inch apart. These lines will wash off. Place the shaver on the lines as you shave to guide your shaving around your entire leg.

Women have a few other options for removing hair from their body. Always talk to an adult caregiver or family member before trying a new hair-removal option.

These are some of the other options:

- Tweezing is an option for isolated hairs. Tweezing can harm hair follicles and make hairs even more stubborn. Isolated hairs should be cut with scissors instead.
- Waxing is a longer-term, somewhat painful option for removal of hair across wide areas, such as legs or hair around the bikini line. Some people have their underarm hair or facial hair waxed. The procedure can leave skin temporarily red and irritated.
- Electrolysis uses electricity to destroy hair follicles and prevent the hair from re-growing. The technique, which can be painful, is used primarily for facial hair.
- Laser hair removal is effective for fair-skinned individuals with dark, coarse hair and is an increasingly popular, expensive option. It is less painful than electrolysis and may offer permanent hair removal.

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