- Aesthetics

BEAUTY MYTHS BUSTED

Does shaving cause thicker growth? Will your toothpaste zap away that zit? We separate fact from fiction to debunk common beauty misconceptions

Gulf News · 28 Feb 2022 · 1 · By Jennifer Barretto Assistant Editor Features

Have you ever avoided a razor like the plague because of a belief that you would turn into a yeti? Or scrubbed your face with harsh products because a zit popped up? We all have certain beliefs about skincare, beauty and make-up, and their effects on us — and some of those beliefs aren't always rooted in reality.



We debunk 10 of the most prevalent beauty myths and — hopefully — inspire you to question other such ideas.

SHAVING CAUSES HAIR TO GROW BACK THICKER

If shaving could change the thickness and structure of our hair, people might have been enthusiastic about shaving their heads to produce a lusher mane. However, that's just not the case. Shaving the hair on your legs or arms — or even face — does not make it grow back thicker or more prominently. However, because shaving cuts the hair at an angle, the growth will seem more prickly or sharp. Alternatively, the benefit of a hair removal method that pulls the hair out completely — such as waxing — is that the regrowth is softer and naturally tapered.

PORES CAN OPEN AND CLOSE

This is one myth that is perpetuated all the time, and we're here to tell you that it's false. Pores are the openings of hair follicles and applying heat or cold to them will not alter their size or shape. Steam is sometimes used during facials to help soften blackheads and debris within the pores, thus making it easy to remove. However, the pore itself does not expand or shut. If large pores are an
issue, using chemical exfoliators (such as salicylic acid) or retinol can help minimise their appearance. Pores and skin texture are completely natural and aren't anything to be ashamed about.

PEOPLE WITH OILY SKIN SHOULD NOT MOISTURISE

If at the end of the day, your face feels like an oil slick, it might seem odd to incorporate moisturisers in your morning skincare routine, or even your evening one. However, every skin type needs to be hydrated and soothed. The key is to use a moisturiser that's suited for your skin type and that has ingredients such as niacinamide that will help control oil production. Gel creams are a lightweight option to keep your skin feeling quenched but comfortable enough to wear through the day. If you're a little braver, use a heavier, oil-based moisturiser in the evening to wake up with super plump and healthy feeling skin. As always, if you suffer from severe acne or very oily skin, it's best to consult with a dermatologist.

WASHING YOUR FACE FREQUENTLY CAN HELP WITH ACNE

Anyone who has faced any kind of acne has probably been told to be more vigorous in their washing, implying that the breakouts are the cause of poor hygiene. Not only is that emotionally frustrating for the person dealing with it, it's also mostly false. Yes, it's important to maintain cleanliness and wash your face. However, there are many causes for pimples or skin conditions — age, diet, hormones, genetics and more. Being too enthusiastic with cleansing can cause even more havoc by stripping the skin of its natural oils and damaging the protective skin barrier.

CELLULITE CAN BE SCRUBBED AWAY

Even the most body positive of people can sometimes have a tough time accepting their cellulite — those pesky dimples that dot the thighs and derrière. Companies prey on insecurities by selling all types of creams and scrubs to 'cure' it. Unfortunately, they're all an exercise in futility. Cellulite is caused by naturally occurring fat deposits under the skin that are pushing through connective tissue. Around 80 to 90 per cent of women have it — no matter the person's weight. However, exercising and weight training can minimise the look of cellulite, as it increases muscle tone. There are some surgical and nonsurgical treatments that can reduce fat cells and therefore reduce the appearance of cellulite. Use those scrubs and creams for smoother skin, but that's about all they can do.

PRESERVATIVES IN SKINCARE ARE BAD

A war has been waged in the skincare world against parabens and other preservatives. But there is no evidence to suggest that these products cause damage to humans. In fact they serve an important purpose. Preservatives prolong the freshness of your favourite creams and lotions, prevent the growth of dangerous bacteria and mould, and essentially protect users from the real nasty stuff. There is even evidence of some 'clean' beauty brands having their products turn rancid because they opted to leave out preservatives.

PULLING OUT GREY HAIR CAUSES MORE TO GROW

This old wives' tale has been spouted more times that we can remember, but it's simply not based in fact. Once a single hair is removed from a follicle, a single hair will grow in its place — not multiple. The greying of ones hair is genetic or determined by other factors such as stress, smoking and diet. Additionally, plucking out hair repeatedly can damage the follicle and lead to hair not growing back at all. It's better to stick to hair dyes to deal with greys.

'HYPOALLERGENIC' SKINCARE MEANS IT'S ALWAYS SAFE

Products that are labelled as hypoallergenic are assumed to be particularly suited for those with allergy-prone and sensitive skin. The problem is that there aren't any regulations applied on the use of the term, so basically anything can have the label 'Hypoallergenic'. There's no guarantee that a product with that label will be safe for everyone. Those with skin issues would be better off reading ingredient labels and learning about that they are sensitive to.

YOU DON'T NEED SUNSCREEN IF YOUR MAKE-UP HAS SPF

It's a fact that sunscreen is the basis of a good skincare routine. SPF is one of the strongest defences in your arsenal as it prevents sun damage, premature wrinkles and pigmentation — only if you use enough of it. Derma-

tologists recommend around half a teaspoon of sunscreen for the face and neck to adequately protect the skin. Even though there are foundations that contain SPF, unless you're using half a teaspoon of it, it's not going to be enough. Additionally, if you're looking for sun protection above SPF 30, you won't find it in many make-up products. To be safe, apply your sunscreen, let it sit for a while and then go in with your base make-up. Most sunscreens are designed to adhere to the skin, so they actually make for good make-up primers.

TOOTHPASTE WILL HELP CURE A PIMPLE

Please put the Colgate down — it's not going to help that pimple. While toothpaste can have a drying effect on a zit, the minty ingredients in most toothpastes can also further agitate a pimple and make it worse. Instead, use zit stickers/pimple patches; they are a safe and non-irritating way to calm down an angry spot and draw out the pus from it.