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## Shaving your armpits without water could be making the skin on your underarms darker



When it comes to getting rid of body hair, you can't afford to take short cuts. Rushing a wax or epilation session can result in all kinds of pain, while being half-arsed about shaving is a one-way street to nicking yourself.

But there's also another reason why giving yourself a quick once-over with a razor without water is best avoided: it can make your skin darker.

Now, no one's saying that you should remove your hair or that patches of darker skin are necessarily unsightly but if you are shaving your armpits then you're probably not here for hyperpigmentation in those areas.

Speaking to Refinery29, **dermatologist Dr Sheel Desai Solomon** explained that shaving dry skin with a dull blade can make the skin darken over time. She said that dark underarms are really common and while they can be caused by genetics and conditions like diabetes, they can also come from our everyday habits.

One of those is shaving without water. That, Dr Solomon says, can cause the skin to darken and thicken over time – as can shaving with old, blunt blades.

Some deodorants are also responsible for irritating and darkening the skin over time, especially if they contain aluminium (which can clog the pores).

So, what can you do about darker armpits?

First things first, swerve the scrubs and exfoliators because that'll only increase irritation in the area. Instead, make your own skin masks at home using either a tablespoon of lemon juice or blended cucumbers and some aloe vera.

Dr Solomon advises to mix the lemon/cucumber with aloe before smothering on the armpits and leaving for ten minutes before washing off.

Cucumbers are packed with silica which can help to stimulate tissue growth – helping with the rejuvenation of tired, inflamed areas, while lemon juice is supposed to have a lightening effect while aloe nourishes stressed out skin and can help relieve inflammation.

Be careful when using acidic substances like lemon in case you have any cuts or sensitive skin. Lemon juice can also make your skin way more sensitive to the sun so if you do go for that option, be sure to either cover up your skin when you step outside or apply sun cream (imagine the pain of having burnt armpits).

If your deodorant is causing a problem, try an aluminium and paraben-free option. Not only might your ultra-chemically antiperspirant be making your armpits darker, but it may also be responsible for the grim yellow stains on all your white shirts.

Those off-colour marks are caused by a reaction between the aluminium and your sweat. Eliminate synthetic aluminium from your armpit and you'll eliminate the staining.

It's also worth saying that if you are experiencing dark underarms or patches of hyperpigmentation in other areas and you know that it's not down to shaving or deodorant, you might want to chat to your GP.

Diabetes can cause dark patches because it affects the small blood vessels of the body that supply the skin with blood. Those changes can cause a skin

condition called diabetic dermopathy, which presents as light brown or red scaly patches.

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) can also be a factor in pigmentation changes.

Acanthosis nigricans is the name for the brown patches that can pop up on the neck, under arms or groin and they're caused by insulin resistance. Up to 80% of women who have the condition live with insulin resistance, even if they're not overweight. Essentially, too much insulin can cause the outer layer of skin cells to start producing rapidly – too fast. And that then leads to a build up on skin which get darker and more velvety as they increase.

Your dark underarms are probably down to your habits – and they're easily rectifiable – but if that's not the reason, then definitely get them checked out.

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