1. I am a 23-year-old man. Of late, I have been facing a problem while having sex. The upper skin of my penis doesn’t open up, and when I pull it, I experience a lot of pain. I am really worried that this will affect my relationship with my girlfriend. Which ointment should I apply? You have a tight foreskin. Visit a surgeon to decide whether it will loosen by gently moving up and down, or if you need a simple operation.

2. I am 33 and have had a healthy life throughout. My private part is larger as compared to the average size. One of the women in the society about our sex life and my private part is larger as compared to the average size. My wife is very social and has been facing a problem when I pull it, I experience a lot of pain. The cause is insulin resistance, which occurs when fat accumulates inside muscle cells. Even thin people can have fat inside their muscle cells, and can hence become diabetic. Eating plant-based foods can cause this fat to build up in muscle cells. Dr Shah explains, “Such fats are especially unhealthy as they are not combined with fibre, as is the case with plant-based fats such as coconuts, peanuts and sesame.” Over time, these fatty deposits in the muscle cause insulin resistance.

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**HEALTH TIP:** Guava leaves have anti-bacterial characteristics which help fighting infections. Strawberries contain ellagic acid and flavonoids which improve heart health through their antioxidant effects.

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**DR MAHINDER WATSA**

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Hair raising concern

Why women should never ignore those little strands growing on their chin

Although most women don’t grow beards, spindly chin hair can be a common occurrence. Often, this is normal, and a product of age or hormone imbalance during pregnancy, for example. Dr Dinky Engelman says a few hair on the chin are just part of the deal for most women. They may well be unwanted, but usually they’re only visible if you look closely in the mirror anyway.

But sometimes it can be an indicator of a health problem. It’s when more than the occasional stray strand pops up that could be a sign of hirsutism, which is a condition that sees women grow stiffer, darker body hair in atypical spots. Hirsutism isn’t dangerous. But it’s the sign that something else might be amiss.

Here are the facts and what to look for:

Genetics
Excess chin hair might just be genetic. If your grandmother has a few stray hairs, you too might experience the same in later life. If you’ve ever noticed chin hair on your grandma or mother, then you might notice the same thing on your own chin at around the same age.

Unbalanced hormones
Hormones are often the culprit behind your body doing abnormal things. Chin hair included. It might be an overabundance of male sex hormones, called androgens.

Age
That’s you being a grandmother again. If you get to 70, 80, 90, prepare for the possibility. They might arrive earlier, during menopause, due to the fact women start producing less estrogen.

Polycystic ovary syndrome
This is a more serious thing. Shortened to PCOS, the condition can have a profound impact on reproductive health and hormones. Chin hair alone isn’t a sign, but twinned with symptoms such as irregular periods, trouble losing weight, infertility, and sometimes ovarian cysts, means that going to the doctor is a good idea.

Cushing syndrome
Excess chin hair can sometimes be linked to something called Cushng syndrome, according to the National Adrenal Diseases Foundation, which is triggered by too much of the stress hormone cortisol. Either your adrenal glands are producing too much on their own, or their production is being accelerated by certain arthritis or asthma medications. Stretch marks, weight gain, and even type 2 diabetes might also be linked.

Talk to your doctor if need be. Congenital adrenal hyperplasia
Some chin hair might be caused by congenital adrenal hyperplasia, which is a condition typically diagnosed at birth. It’s extremely rare — and, probably, you’d know if you had it. It’s another reason for chin hair, however.

Pregnancy or birth control
Yes, pregnancy, which has a massive impact on women’s bodies. Some unusual or excessive chin hair growth is nothing to be worried about in expectant mothers. It’s usually temporary.

How to get rid of unwanted chin hair?
Whether a sign of something potentially harmful or not, you might want to get rid of the chin hair. The easiest way to remove it is by simply plucking it, bleaching it, or waxing. A longer-term might be laser remove. Talking to your doctor might help you prevent it rather than just seek out a ‘cure’.

— Daily Mirror

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AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS

Autoimmune disorders include type 1 diabetes, multi sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and leukodera or vitiligo. These occur when the body produces antibodies — blood proteins produced to counter specific antigens that the body recognizes as alien — in response to its own cells. “Such a response is quite atypical of the human body. The healthy body is well equipped to heal itself. However, when foreign proteins enter the body, in the form of animal-based foods, vaccinations and blood transfusions, the cells of these proteins can be quite similar to the cells of our body. For instance, the cells of milk are similar to the cells of our pancreas. When our body produces antibodies for the milk cells, they also affect our pancreatic cells. Eliminating animal-based products can hence go a long way in preventing and even reversing autoimmune disorders.” However, she warns that these conditions can take longer than others to heal, since complete reversal will only occur when the antibodies go out of circulation.

HEART DISEASE

Thickened blood injures the arterial walls. The body tries to ‘cement’ these injuries with cholesterol, and this is a process that begins when we are very young. Over time, this cholesterol combines with fats, calcium and other substances in the blood to form plaque. As the plaque builds up and hardens in the arteries, our blood vessels begin to narrow. Unfortunately, owing to the human body’s resilience, we often don’t feel the symptoms until our arteries are 70 per cent blocked,” she says. Plaque can also break away from larger arteries and flow into smaller arteries, blocking the latter. The location of the blocked artery will determine the impact on the body — for instance, a blockage in the heart will give rise to heart attacks, while blockages in the brain will lead to a stroke. While modern medicine treats these conditions with blood thinners and vasodilators, Dr Shah says, “Thinner blood can also dissolve some of the cholesterol lining the arteries, and open them up.” Plant-based fats that combine fibre with fats are better suited to the body since the fibre prevents the fat from clogging up the blood stream.

OBESITY

Recent World Health Organization statistics reveal that nearly a third of the world is overweight and obese. Childhood obesity is far more prevalent today than ever before. Dr Shah believes that obesity is caused by eating too little. “Most of nutrients, and taste, contained in vegetables and grains is contained just under the skin. Processes such as peeling and husking eliminate these nutrients. And so, foods such as sugar, oil, and potatoes are stripped of nutrients. Consuming these foods over a period of time makes our bodies chronically starved of nutrients. We then eat more in an attempt to compensate for these nutrients. As a result, we overeat and are undernourished,” she says.

At SHARAN, participants are taught to adopt a whole, plant- based organic diet, and also taught to cook without oil. By eating high quality foods that satisfy the body, participants enjoy sustainable weight loss, while also witnessing substantial improvements in their overall health and wellbeing.

STARTING SLOW

While adopting all the changes recommended by Sharan may seem a little intimidating, Dr Shah recommends taking it slow and approaching a dietary shift with small, but firm steps. For starters, you can:

- Eliminate packaged foods, oils, tea and coffee
- Eliminate animal-based products including all forms of dairy
- Eat organic fruits and vegetables
- Eat whole foods. This includes whole grains and whole, unpeeled vegetables
- Eliminate oils and consume more fibre-based fats such as peanuts, seeds and coconuts

Dr Nandita Shah has worked with numerous individuals suffering from chronic and often debilitating conditions. By transforming their diet, she says she has succeeded in bringing about lasting impact on these individuals’ overall health and wellbeing.

HORMONAL CONDITIONS

Shah believes that thyroid disorders, polycystic ovarian disease and even infertility are rooted in hormone disruptors. These disruptors, she says, come from multiple sources, chief of which is our diet. “A worryingly large percentage of the food and medicines we consume contain hormones. Milk and meat products contain large amounts of adrenaline, which is produced when the animal becomes stressed. Grass-fed animals also consume large amounts of hormones owing to modern agricultural practices. Even if animals do not ingest any external hormones, the meat and milk will still contain the natural hormones produced by the animal, which often disagrees with our body. For instance, the cells of our body. For instance, the cells of our body. For instance, the cells of our body. For instance, the cells of our body. For instance, the cells of our body. For instance, the cells of our body.”

She recommends paying attention to our overall lifestyle. “Personal care products such as shampoos, soaps, lotions and makeup contain large amounts of potentially toxic chemicals. A common rule I prescribe for personal care items is to only use those items on your body that you would feel comfortable putting into your mouth.” The night dietary and lifestyle changes, she adds, can reverse all hormonal conditions, even infertility.