THE MYSTERY OF THE INGROWN HAIR

MOST PEOPLE GET THEM, BUT WHY DON'T WE TALK ABOUT IT?

By Lilliane Caron.

Anyone who has ever shaved or waxed will no doubt be familiar with ingrown hairs and well aware of the pain, irritation and embarrassment they cause. As a therapist, I've seen many ingrown hairs and the most memorable ones are the ones that have been squeezed, picked, plucked, dug out and cut at by frustrated clients looking for a solution. More often than not, this leads to infection and potential scarring.

No one wants to have ingrown hairs! They're unsightly, sometimes painful and itchy causing much discomfort, sometimes so bad that the client gives up on waxing altogether. Why put a client through of all of this when solutions exist?!

I thought the best place to start this piece is to explain what an ingrown hair is and why they occur. To put it simply, an ingrown hair is a hair that does not emerge from the follicle but remains embedded in the skin, usually causing inflammation. Ingrown hairs can occur after hair removal when dead skin cells accumulate and form a papule as the skin heals. Hair growing in the area gets trapped under the papule and is prevented from exiting the skin, creating an ingrown hair. Irritating and unsightly ingrown hairs can occur on any part of the body however are most common under the arms, bikini line, legs, chest and on the face/neck for men. Ingrown hairs and other problems associated with hair removal vary from person to person and can be more prominent depending on hair and skin types.

I have the feeling most therapists are scared of offending or embarrassing clients when they have ingrown hairs and therefore the client is left to figure out this pesky problem on their own. The truth of it is that ingrown hairs are just as important to talk about with clients as any other skin concern. Clients come to us for a professional/expert service and I believe that it is just as important to ensure their skin is as smooth, as it is hair-free.

We always recommend treatments for common skin issues within a facial treatment; cleansers, toners or moisturizers, so why are we ignoring the obvious when it comes to other issues? From my experience, it comes down to the fear of pushing retail sales by the therapist – even though offering a solution to a common problem will make the client happier and more confident in your service.

When it comes to a waxing treatment, some therapists feel that clients don't want to be asked about buying any further products; however I feel we are here to offer a complete service to our clients no matter what the salon treatment, and that includes suggesting a solution to the treatment and/or prevention of ingrown hairs. Plus, as a salon owner myself, I believe it's always advantageous to an opportunity like this to cross-sell a complimentary product... more likely than not, you'll make that sale and that in itself should be some motivation to suggest a product!

So, how do we overcome the hurdle of the awkward ingrown conversation?

The first step is to ensure you retail some sort of ingrown hair treatment. When looking for a brand to stock ensure the product has excellent testimonials. Test it out on yourself and other therapists in the salon first. If your therapists have faith in a product it will make it easier for them to endorse and sell than something they've never used. It's also a good idea to have some posters or information about the range you stock in the waiting area and treatment room. Why not look into some branded t-shirts or badges as part of your salon uniform? These sorts of items can help start the conversation and make clients feel more at ease about the topic.
Secondly, when in a treatment, chat to your client. Sometimes it is easy to extract an ingrown hair safely. Talk through this process with them, explain what you are doing and perhaps inform them then of products you have available to prevent and treat them.

It’s not just women who are affected by ingrown hairs. Men are also extremely prone to ingrown hairs and shaving rash due to the coarseness of their hairs. There are products out there specifically suited to treating and preventing shaving rash on the face and neck which work amazingly well. Make sure you stock a range of products that can accommodate the needs of all of your clients.

I always make a point of talking about treatment and prevention products to my clients and often they come back thanking me for getting them onto a product that has relieved them from the ingrown hair battles! It’s this client appreciation that makes me think that there are so many more lives that could gain a little relief from us simply not being scared to approach the subject it with our clients!

Today is the day to remove the awkward mystery and start the conversation about ingrown hairs! It’s time to banish the bumps! You’ll be surprised by the results; change in attitudes and well, the client appreciation will speak for itself!

My top 5 tips for smooth skin!

1. Exfoliate daily! The removal of dead skin cells will aid the prevention of ingrown hairs as there will be less chance of the hair getting trapped under the skin.

2. Do not touch! If the hair cannot easily be lifted with a pair of clean tweezers (without breaking the skin), leave it alone!

3. Find the right product for your particular concern. Different products will give different results. If you’re a stickler for routine buy a product that will help in the prevention and elimination of ingrown hairs. If you’re someone who forgets to use a product daily, go for a treatment only product designed to be used once an ingrown appears. Go for products in packaging that suit the area being treated. Eg) if the ingrown hairs are on a small area of the body, a spot treatment is best. If it’s a large area like arms, legs, chest or back, a lotion, spray or serum is far better and more economical.

4. Don’t be fooled by price. The most expensive treatments for ingrown hairs are not always the best (or at least any better). Always look for product reviews and testimonials and if possible ask for a sample first.

5. Other ailments! If you’re also suffering from other bumps, pustules and pimples a lot of ingrown hair treatments will often aid these concerns too. There are even some treatments out there that retard hair growth and there’s even some which ease the discomfort of waxing! Multi-purpose all-rounders, ammust for any bathroom cabinet!

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If you’d like to ask Lilliane Caron for some advice on your own salon, email info@waxxpress.com