

# sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

## wildfact

Free H1N1 flu vaccine (Flu Mist and shots) on Tuesday, 12/8 (10am-4pm) and Wednesday, 12/9 (9:30am-4pm) on the UA Mall (by Canyon Cafe). Please check the Flu News section at [www.health.arizona](http://www.health.arizona) for eligibility.

## Q What is the purpose of pubic hair? Should it be removed completely?

A. Depending upon the person, you'll get different answers, since there is no clear reason to why we have pubic hair or its purpose. Some believe its function is the same as our nose hair and eyelashes: to protect dirt and particles from entering openings of the body. If this were true, then males should have hair protecting their urethra (opening of the penis). Another theory is that it's there to protect our genitals from the cold when we still wore loincloths. If this were the case then there should be hair on the shaft of the penis and more hair on the scrotum to insulate the testicles; and women should have more hair on their lower abdomen to protect their reproductive organs. Since these do not hold to be true, it is difficult to say what the real purpose of pubic hair is.

What we do know about pubic hair is that it holds on to pheromones. Pheromones are secretions from apocrine glands combined with bacteria broken down by sebaceous glands. The resulting scent is sexually stimulating and is different from person to person based on genetics. We seem to be attracted to scents that are different from our own.

How we treat our hair is a personal choice. Whether you remove, style, color, or trim, there are a variety of ways to go about it. Different preferences include going bald, having a style or going au natural. Some people tweeze, some wax, while others shave and many don't do anything at all. People even go as far as to get professionally styled. Whatever your preference, there is no right or wrong way to keep your pubic hair. If you decide to do some grooming down there, be sure to take some precautions about how you do it, since you are working in a very sensitive area. For example, use a clean razor or make sure your salon follows proper hygiene guidelines.

There is also a notion that you cannot get pubic lice (crabs) if pubic hair is completely removed. This is not true; the possibility may be reduced, but it is present nonetheless. For more information, visit [www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu) and search for "lice." If you're worried you may have an STD, get checked out. To make an appointment with Campus Health, call 621-9202.

Guest columnist: Mallory Jordan,  
Health Education Senior



Have a question? Send it to [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES and David Salafsky, MPH, health educators at The University of Arizona Campus Health Service.