

AskDoctor
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SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO
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How can I permanently get rid of beards as a woman?

I have a few facial hairs on my chin, and I shave them regularly to avoid being called *kyakulasajja*, which means "masculine woman." How can I permanently remove them?
Anonymous



Dear Anonymous,

Today, many girls may develop facial hair after puberty, which can be influenced by genetics. For instance, many women of Asian or Mediterranean descent may naturally have facial hair. In Uganda, some women choose to pluck these hairs, while others keep them secretly due to local beliefs about attracting riches.

This condition is known as hirsutism, which refers to male-like hair growth in women, including the development of beards. While it is often viewed as a cosmetic issue that can cause stress, hirsutism may sometimes have medical causes. It is crucial to consult a doctor for a proper evaluation and solution.

Medical causes of hirsutism can include Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) or other hormonal imbalances, especially those involving elevated male hormones and stress hormones such as cortisol. Factors such as age, menopause, and certain medications, especially steroids used for allergies or muscle building, can also trigger beard growth.

In rare cases, a woman may develop facial hair due to a tumour that produces male hormones. This condition is usually accompanied by other male characteristics, known as virilisation, including a deep voice, baldness, an enlarged clitoris, and increased muscle mass.

Obesity in women can also contribute to this condition, as it may lead to insulin resistance. This not only increases the risk of type 2 diabetes but can also elevate male hormone levels, further promoting facial hair growth. It is important to maintain a healthy weight, refrain from using unprescribed medications, and monitor for any additional symptoms that could indicate a more serious underlying issue. While laser hair removal or electrolysis can be effective treatments for unwanted hair growth, consulting a doctor first is essential to address any underlying causes.

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