

## Experts warn against using depilatories like Veet, Nair

Nydailynews.com



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Depilatories like Veet melt proteins in the hair and skin.

Want to ruin your summer? It only takes three minutes.

That's what dermatologists were saying Tuesday, one day after a Manhattan woman sued the makers of Veet hair-removal cream claiming she got third-degree burns when she hit the beach after using the product.

"Even without sun exposure I've seen people who have been burned or irritated from the product just because it is fairly caustic to the skin," said Dendy Engelman, a dermatologic surgeon in Manhattan.

"A three-minute treatment that turns into months of displeasure from being disfigured could ruin your whole summer."

Lauren Waterman, director of the Chloe boutique in SoHo, says in her suit, filed Monday, that that's what happened to her, though she acknowledged the product's warning label explained that side effects could include allergic reactions, discomfort, and irritation.

Depilatories work by dissolving hair with chemicals such as calcium hydroxide and potassium hydroxide — but those same toxins can also irritate skin, sometimes for months.

**"It's my least favorite of all the (hair-removal) options," added Dr. Rebecca Baxt, another dermatologist who prefers shaving, waxing, laser hair removal and electrolysis.**

Brands like Veet and Nair are FDA-approved, but come with warnings because the chemicals in them are so strong.



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Test hair removal cream on a smaller skin patch before using it on a larger area.

Irritation can show up immediately in the form of red, raw skin, or can take a few days, Baxt says. In rare cases, the skin can start to crust and ooze.

So, if you must banish your bristles, the experts recommend:

1. Test the cream on a patch of skin first to make sure you're not hypersensitive.
2. Leave the cream on for less than the lowest recommended amount of time. "If you leave this on too long, almost everyone will see irritation," said Engelman.
3. Have a wet washcloth (or shower nozzle) ready.

The maker of Veet, Reckitt Benckiser, declined to comment.