


# ELECTROLYSIS

## A MICROSCOPIC VIEWPOINT

A detailed red-toned illustration of skin tissue in cross-section. At the top, two blue and white electrodes are shown inserted into the epidermis. Below them, the epidermal layer is depicted with a grid of small, circular cells. A hair follicle is shown in the middle, with a dark, bulbous structure at its base. The dermis below is characterized by thick, wavy collagen fibers and various cellular structures. The entire illustration is framed by a thin black border.

**E**lectrolysis was first employed professionally in 1875 by Charles E. Michel, M.D. Equipment and techniques of permanent hair removal have since evolved into a highly technical and tightly controlled science.

# ELECTROEPILATION

## WHAT IS ELECTROLYSIS?

Electrolysis is the only form of permanent hair removal recognized by the Food and Drug Administration and the American Medical Association. Ask your doctor about it. *Electrolysis is not to be confused with electronic tweezing.*

Today there are several methods of electroepilation (permanent hair removal by electrical current). Each employ the use of a tiny sterile needle and are referred to as electrolysis to avoid confusion. Methods of electroepilation include thermolysis, multi-needle electrolysis and the blend technique. The electrologist will determine the best method for your individual needs.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Electrolysis is a safe, permanent method of hair removal.

Superfluous (unwanted) hair affects both men and women, some more severely than others. Today's health and fashion conscious society has made the need to free yourself of unwanted hair more desirable than ever.

Electrolysis can permanently remove unwanted hair from such areas as:

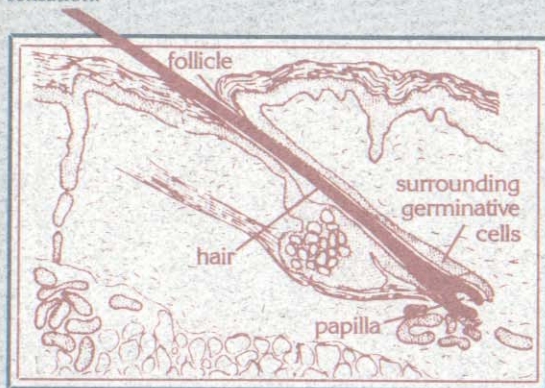
- abdomen
- chest
- hairlines
- back
- ears
- hands
- beardlines
- eyebrows
- legs
- bikini lines
- face
- shoulders
- breast
- feet
- underarms

The following information answers the most commonly asked questions, aiding you in finding an electrologist to remove your unwanted hair. Definitions for your convenience are included in a glossary.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

A fine sterile filament (needle) is gently inserted along the side of the hair into the follicle without puncturing the skin. This insertion produces no sensation. A mild, carefully controlled current is applied. This should be the only sensation felt during treatment. The current destroys the papilla and surrounding germinative cells, preventing future hair production. The hair is then epilated without sensation.



## WHAT CAUSES EXCESS HAIR?

There are two major causes of excess hair:

1. *Increased blood supply* caused by skin irritation nourishes the hair and accelerates growth.

2. *Hormonal imbalance of androgens*

A) natural body changes

- 1) pregnancy
- 2) puberty
- 3) menopause

B) emotional stress which increases adrenalin and accelerates growth.

C) medications

- 1) birth control pills
- 2) steroids

D) medical disorders

While the health condition may be only temporary, the hair developed is permanent. Electrolysis is the only way to permanently remove this new growth of hair.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

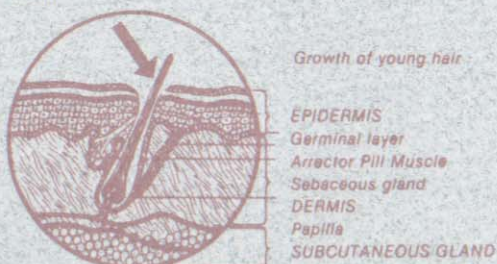
While electrolysis is indeed permanent, it is not instant. Approximately 3 months are required before noticeable results are obtained. This is due to the natural shedding and replacing of the hair. Initially, treatments are quite frequent, tapering off as progress is made. Appointments must be kept regularly in order to effectively maintain the previously cleared area. Treatment of catagen hair is thus avoided. The frequency and duration of treatments are as individual as each person. Several variables must be considered, including:

- the amount of hair
- hair texture
- skin sensitivity
- previous removal methods  
(such as waxing or tweezing)
- pain tolerance

## ARE THERE ANY AFTER EFFECTS?

Immediately after treatment you may have slight redness or swelling. Tiny scabs may appear 1-4 days after treatment. These scabs are not uncommon and should not be forcibly removed. This could cause unnecessary pitting or scarring.

Antibiotic cream should be applied to avoid infection immediately after treatment and continued until the area resumes normal appearance. This home care is vital and cannot be over-emphasized. Cosmetics should be avoided for the first 24 hours on the treated area. Intense exposure to sunlight should also be avoided, as temporary freckling may result.



## WHAT CAN I DO BETWEEN TREATMENTS?

Clipping or shaving the hair is the best temporary method of hair removal. Bleaching and use of depilatories are also acceptable as long as they do not irritate the skin.

Tweezing and waxing should be avoided as they may cause the hair to strengthen. This may also distort the follicle, increasing the risk of ingrown or imbedded hairs.

Shaving the area 3 days prior to treatment will help ensure the hair to be treated will be in the anagen stage. This reduces the treatment of catagen and telogen hair; thus, minimizing regrowth.

## DOES IT HURT?

A slight discomfort will be felt *only* after needle insertion and before the hair is removed. That is the time the current is administered. Remember, the electrologist is destroying living tissue (the papilla and surrounding germinative cells). Therefore, a sensation *should* be felt at this time to confirm effective treatment.

A thoughtful electrologist will be conscious of your pain tolerance and will proceed accordingly. The more tolerance to this discomfort, the faster the hair can be removed. With minimal precaution even the most sensitive person can tolerate the treatment.

A pain reliever taken 20-30 minutes before the treatment will help relieve discomfort, while stimulants such as caffeine should be avoided. Relaxation is a key factor; if you are nervous or anxious your adrenalin rises and you become tense and more sensitive. Simply relax.

A few hairs should be treated to evaluate skin and pain tolerance. Insufficient treatment is indicated if a tweezing sensation is felt when the hair is removed.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION?

Consult your electrologist; he/she is trained to recognize symptoms which may need medical attention. Questions you may be asked include:

- When did you first notice the hair growth?
- Has it progressed to other areas?
- Have you been taking any medications?
- Do you have a family history of excess hair?
- Have you noticed any other body changes such as: menstrual irregularity  
abdominal pain  
signs of virilism (secondary male characteristics)

Further investigation is needed if, upon evaluation, a medical disorder is suspected. You should be advised to have a physician evaluate the condition to rule out underlying hormonal abnormalities. If such a problem is detected, the underlying condition must be treated. Otherwise, new hairs will continue to develop, making treatments endless.

## WHAT IS REGROWTH?

Occasionally due to distortion from natural curl, previous severe acne, scar tissue or past tweezing, electrolysis does not completely destroy the papilla. Catagen hair also blocks access to this area. In these cases the follicle will be undertreated and a finer, lighter hair will appear between 5-14 weeks after treatment. This is regrowth.

The weaker hair is the result of partial destruction, as the hair is not receiving full nourishment. The hair should be retreated at this time to avoid natural reconstruction of the hair by the follicle. Consistent treatments minimize regrowth.

Hair appearing within 5 weeks after the first clearing of the area is not to be confused with regrowth. This hair is naturally replacing previously shed hair or hair which had been removed by a non-permanent method. This hair is in the anagen stage and is ideal to treat.

## HOW DO I FIND AN ELECTROLOGIST?

The same care should be taken as in choosing any other health care specialist. Ask your doctor or dermatologist for recommendations. Quality of professional service should be stressed.

A competent electrologist will continue to be knowledgeable of updated technology through participation in

professional electrolysis organizations and seminars.

Before beginning treatments, request a consultation and ask questions. No guarantees should be made as to how long it will take to permanently clear the area, since too many variables are involved.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Adrenalin** — a hormone secreted by the medulla of the adrenal glands which raises metabolism, stimulates the nervous system, increases heart rate and raises blood pressure.

**Anagen** — the active growing stage of the hair cycle.

**Androgens** — male hormone produced in both males and females. Overabundance in women may stimulate unwanted hair growth.

**Blend** — the use of alternating current and direct current to permanently destroy the hair; a blending of electrolysis and thermolysis; referred to as electrolysis.

**Catagen** — the degenerating growth cycle of the hair between the active anagen & telogen stage.

**Electroepilation** — medical term for permanent hair removal by electric current.

**Electrologist** — technician trained to perform electrolysis. Licensing is required in Indiana.

**Electrolysis** — single or multiple needle permanent hair removal using direct current to destroy the hair. All methods of electroepilation (electrolysis, thermolysis and the blend) are referred to as electrolysis.

**Epilate** — to remove the hair by the root.

**Follicle** — depression in the skin containing the hair root; pore.

**Germinative** — growing and developing cells.

**Papilla** — source of blood supply which gives the hair its nourishment, enabling hair growth and development.

**Telogen** — the resting or dormant stage of the hair's growth cycle.

**Thermolysis** — the use of alternating current to permanently destroy the hair; also referred to as high frequency, short wave, and electrolysis.

**Virilism** — secondary male characteristics in women, such as: balding at the temples, male facial hair pattern, and deepening of the voice.



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I am a dedicated electrologist, licensed in Indiana and nationally certified by the American Electrology Association. I have served on a committee for the State Board of Beauty Culturists with the intent to further improve the training of Indiana electrologists.

I am an active member of the American Electrology Association and the International Guild of Professional Electrologists Inc. I am president of the Indiana Electrolysis Association, and was previously newsletter editor.

I employ all methods of electroepilation, including thermolysis, multi-needle electrolysis, and the blend. The mode of epilation used is customized to your individual needs.

Electrolysis can be for anyone, whether you want removal of just a few hairs or a massive area. Your first visit is complimentary and very educational. You are not obligated or pressured to continue any treatments.

Prior to opening my own office, I practiced under the supervision of dermatologists Charles W. Bartholome, M.D. and Michael K. Crider, M.D. at the Dermatology Clinic of Muncie, Inc.

Please feel free to schedule your complimentary consultation to see if electrolysis is the answer for you.

Sincerely,

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