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BEAUTY ETIQUETTE: YOUR GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL BIKINI WAX APPOINTMENT

WE ANSWER ALL THE UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTIONS, BECAUSE, WELL, SOMEONE HAS TO.

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Booking beauty appointments is easy. Knowing what's expected of you when you show up, how to deal with intimate or awkward situations, and how much to tip? Not quite as simple. So we're bringing you Beauty Etiquette, a series where we talk to salon owners, stylists and aestheticians to find out how to make every salon experience go off without a hitch. Because the last place you want to feel unsure of yourself is pants-down on an exam table surrounded by hot wax.

THE FAQs:

SHOULD I SHOWER BEFORE?

"It's ideal to shower at least that morning before you visit a wax as clean skin allows for a better waxing experience," Noemi Grupenmager, founder and CEO of Uni K Wax Centers, told us. Still worried you're not fresh and clean enough to drop your drawers? Most waxing centers will provide a wet wipe for you, so don't stress over it. No one expects you to go home after work to shower before your appointment.

CAN I GET WAXED ON MY PERIOD?

Yep, no problem. But for your aestheticians sake, please wear a tampon. "However, you might be more sensitive during your menstrual cycle," Grupenmager said, so keep that in mind before booking.

CAN I CHAT WITH MY WAXER?

If making casual talk with the waxer puts you at ease, go for it. "Our waxers are trained to assess whether a customer wants to spark up a conversation or not," said Grupenmager. If they notice you're not up for chit-chat while they're down there, a good waxer will respect that and end the conversations at explaining the process to you.

CAN I DRINK A LITTLE BEFORE TO MAKE IT LESS PAINFUL?

It might actually make it hurt more. "Many people consume alcohol before getting a wax as they assume it will make the pain more bearable, but alcohol actually tightens pores and makes waxing more difficult," Grupenmager explained. (Good to know! – Editor.) "Open pores allows for a more enjoyable waxing experience as the hair follicle is easily removed from the pore; a tight pore will hold onto the follicle and it will either be painful to remove or the hair will break at skin level and your waxing experience will not be as effective."

WHAT ABOUT POPPING A FEW PILLS?

Yes, taking paid meds beforehand is actually smart. Nina Popova, an esthetician and skincare specialist at Roman K Salon in NYC, recommended taking a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) pain medicine, like Aleve, about 30 minutes before your appointment to help minimize the pain.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO MAKE IT AS PAINLESS AS POSSIBLE?

Make sure your skin is properly hydrated in the week leading up to your wax. "Moist, plump skin will release the hair follicle easier, making for a more enjoyable waxing experience," Grupenmager explained. Also, cut back on caffeine if you can, for about three days prior, instructed Popova. It constricts the blood vessels, reducing blood flow and increasing sensitivity.

SHOULD I SAY SOMETHING IF I'M UNHAPPY WITH MY WAX?

Yes, you can and you should express any dissatisfaction you had with your treatment. "The staff always wants to know that you are 100% satisfied, and if you're not, they want to know what the problem was so they can correct it and prevent it from happening again in the future," Grupenmager said. When you head to the reception desk to pay, calmly explain what you were unhappy with, or ask to speak privately to a manager if you'd prefer.

TIP GUIDE:

A bikini wax is pretty much as intimate as a beauty service can get, so general practice is to tip your aesthetician a little more than you would your hairdresser. Grupenmager said she's even seen waxers receive up to a 100% tip, for providing stellar service – though that certainly doesn't mean you need to dole out that much! Popova said 15-20% is the standard percentage, so err on being a little more generous if the service was great.