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Where did you get your unusual jumper from... Wait, that's not a jumper! Like so many things, it comes down to a mixture of genetics and hormones. We know that at least some of the genes for tritry are transferred to the X chromosome – and the way these genes are expressed varies between different male and ethnic groups – but hair growth is also associated with high testosterone levels. Male hairiness may actually have evolved as a way of signaling testosterone levels in potential partners, because testosterone also causes men to develop more muscles. So it's possible that your friend's hairiness was one of the things that attracted you to him as you subconsciously sought out a partner who could get under a hairy mammoth. Read more: Luis trained as a zoologist, but now works as a science and technology educator. In his spare time he builds 3D-printed robots, in the hope that he will be spared when the revolution inevitably comes. Hair How does the body work Q & A When it comes to grooming, men have followed the lead of women in recent years, and chose a body without hair. Lady lawns are increasingly manicured and man rugs are constantly declining. There is no shame in a man admitting to waxing or shaving these days, preferring a polished torso on a hairy chest. What a pity. Nothing wrong with a bit of a neat, but men stripping them of any masculinity seems completely a waste. Give me a rug over a smooth chest any day of the week. 1) Me Tarzan I want to date a man not a plastic doll. Waxing, shaving, bleaching, toning, bending, oil - it's all too much. Unlike over-groomers, hairy men don't look like they're about to embark on some weird S&M game involving a tub of margarine - they look like real men who have more important things to think about than waxing their ball-bags. 2) All or nothing The problem with going without hair is that you have to be all or nothing. There's no point waxing your chest or back if you're not going to finish the job properly and give your crack and sack once over too much. And from there - pubes stop halfway under your feet? Grading with clippers according to density? Ugg, it's a minefield. 3) Hot sex Here is the piece of science - hair growth is determined by hormones, especially testosterone, which contributes to the distribution of a man's fat, muscle strength and sex drive. Also known as - the chest hairier better sex. Get in. 4) Heaven's Hairiness fragrance helps to increase a man's sexy fragrance. According to scientific research, a woman will literally smell a man's genetic makeup before deciding if he's right for her. Hairy men don't just have sex well that they smell like it too much. 5) Trust Hairy men don't give a s**t what the trends are or what David Beckham looks like at the top of the off. It is what it is, unapologetic and embrace what they have Hot. 6) Fluff bum I don't want to date someone who looks like they've just finished their A-levels. I want a man who's around the block a little bit and doesn't shave his upper lip three times a day in the hope that one day he'll look like an adult. 7) Retro hotness Burt Reynolds, Sean Connery, Tom Selleck - retro but warm... Come on, you know you want to. 8) Snuggles Is not only a hairy chest cosier in winter and softer on the cheek, but it means that there is no chance of dreaded growth of three days. Although I recognize that, for some, a completely smooth trunk is preferable to touch, I defy anyone to tell me that they are activated by a stubbly pair of pecks or iron deposit weapons. 9) Your penis does not look like a beaten turkey. Christmas is over, guys, let's move on. 10) Hugh Jackman. A carpet of epic appeal - try and fight, challenge you. MORE: 16 Reasons Ginger Men Are Hot MORE: 10 Reasons To Never Date a Man With a Big Penis Hair EverywhereGetty Pictures/Hero Pictures Good God, You're a Hairy Beast. You may not think you are, and compared to, say, a chimpanzee, you seem visibly bald. But in fact your entire body (with the exception of the palms of your hands and the soles of your feet) is covered by hair. All they told you was that you have about 5 million follicles, about the same as chimpanzees and other primates. But the similarities stop there. Human hair is definitely weird. Most of our body hair is so wispy and short that it is almost invisible, although in some places it is coarse and curly. The hair of our head is almost uniquely long and fancy. We are pretty much the only animal that has hair that grows continuously for many years, and also suffer from the infestation of going bald. No wonder our relationship with our hair is complicated. A duet of hair Hair hair comes in two main types: the finished hair, which grow on the scalp, eyebrows and eyelashes, and vellus hair, which are found everywhere else. Beyond that, the main difference between hair types is how long they grow for before the follicle runs out of steam. This is what determines their length and thickness. Advertising Hair follicles go through cycles of growth and lethargy. During the growth phase the hair grows continuously at about 0.4mm a day, becoming thicker and thicker in the process. But at some point the hair-producing cells die and growth stops. The hair falls out and the follicle goes dosed for about six months from the germination of new hair-producing cells entering a new phase of growth. The length of the growth phase is controlled by hormones. The leg hairs grow for about two months, so they are short and thin. Armpit hairs do it in six months, but head hairs grow non-stop for six years or more. This means that the hair of the head can theoretically grow to almost a meter in length. Ideas abound as to why evolution has endowed us with such a unique combination of Types. The first is that when our two-legged ancestors moved out of the woods and into the heat of the savannah, they had to keep their bodies cool while protecting their big brains from the sun. The body hair subsides, removing an unnecessary insulating layer and also allowing the skin to cool with sweating. Hair loss was also probably helped by technological innovations such as clothes, fire and cave-dwelling, which reduced the importance of fur for keeping warm at night. The hair of the head, meanwhile, became thicker and richer, protecting the brains of our ancestors from the midday sun, while also keeping the heat in the cold. Genetic evidence suggests we became fur-free about 1.7 million years ago. Around this time our ancestor Homo erectus lived in the baking savannah, which supports the hypothesis of thermoregulation. Look! No parasites, but it's not the only possibility. We may also have lost body hair to improve our ability to recognize others and facilitate communication, or resist diseases, as fur is a primary habitat for pests. There is also the sexual choice, which was Charles Darwin's preferred explanation. For whatever reason, the less hairy of our ancestors were considered the most attractive and thus produced more offspring. Hair-free skin may have been a sign to advertise good health and therefore attract mates - a sexual come-on saying. Look how unsymed and parasite-free I am. Sexual selection could also explain the hair of our head. Most people find a strong, healthy head of hair attractive. Indeed, precisely because the hair of our head needs so much care, it makes a perfect build-up on which to advertise the social and sexual situation. Grooming is time consuming, and so having well-groomed hair shows that you are resourceful and have good social contacts. If this is correct, then the main function of head hair is to cut and style for maximum effect. This could explain why lank, unkempt locks are the mark of social parity. Prehistoric style Some of the most ancient figurines have coiffed hair. The oldest known three-dimensional representation of a human, brassempouy's 25,000-year-old Ivory Venus, has elegant shoulder-length hair. And hair products are nothing new either. The 2300-year-old Clonycavan Man, discovered in a swamp in County Meath, Ireland, was wearing hair gels made of vegetable oils and pine resin. The hair may also have been used to signal the identity of the group. At all ages in all cultures, we've used hairstyles as a sign of membership: think Roundheads, Rastafarians and rockafillies. Enough with the hair on your head. Pubic hair is possibly even more unusual. Most primates have thinner hair around their genitals than in the rest of their bodies, but adult people are just the opposite. There's no acceptable explanation. One possibility is that since thicker hair coincides with where we have apocrine (scent) glands, it can serve to gather or waft odors that signal sexual maturity. Pubic hair can also protect the genitals during sex and at other times - reducing friction while walking, for example - and also helps keep our most sensitive areas warm and without currents. Whatever evolved for, many people now subject hair in their pubic areas to as much grooming as hair on their head while ruthlessly removing it from the rest of their bodies. We are not hairless - but not because of lack of effort. Pity the human male: along with the log-tailed macaque, it is the only primate to usually suffer the dignity of hairline retreat. By the age of 30, a quarter of men have started to go bald, and by the age of 45, half have. Male pattern baldness has a predictable trajectory: hair begins to disappear in temples, then at the top of the head, before staging a general retreat that leaves the entire pate hairless. Except he doesn't. Baldness is not about not having hair: It's about having the wrong hair. Bald heads have just as many follicles as any other - about 100,000 - but the follicles have stopped working properly and produce only colorless and wispy hairs. This article appeared in print under the headline Why are people so hairy? • This is an excerpt from How to Be Human, our new illustrated book about the most amazing species on the planet (John Murray) More on these topics: topics:

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