

## 6 Body Parts You Can Stop Cleaning So Often

BY MARISSA LALIBERTE

Some body parts do not have to be squeaky clean. You'll look and feel better if you wash these parts less often (or never!).



### Ears

Gross as it feels, earwax actually cleans your ears by collecting dirt and debris, then carrying them out. Scraping that protective goop from the ear canal will leave your ear unprotected—or worse, says otolaryngologist Dr. Erich Voigt, MD, of NYU Langone Medical Center. “If you put a Q-Tip in, you push that wax in further and then prevent it from being able to flow out naturally,” he says. “The wax is continually produced, and it rolls in on itself and becomes larger, deeper, thicker, and denser over time.” That buildup could give you hearing trouble or an ear infection, so keep cotton swabs, fingers, and other objects out of your ear. Instead, wait

to wipe wax away until it's reached the outside of your ear.



### Dead skin cells

You still should wash your face twice a day, but a deep-cleaning scrub shouldn't be part of your daily regimen, says dermatologist **Jody Levine, MD, of Plastic Surgery & Dermatology of NYC.** “**Over-exfoliating your skin can be just as harmful as using the wrong type of product, as it can strip your skin of natural oils and cause breakouts,**” she says. She recommends exfoliating just twice a week to slough dead skin cells away without leaving your face raw.



### Gut

Those detox cleanses that wellness bloggers flip for are a total waste of time and money, says gastroenterologist and internist Roshini Raj, MD, women's health advocate for Keep Her Awesome. “Your body naturally detoxifies itself through actions in the liver, kidneys, and the colon,” she says. “In the colon, it is actually your healthy bacteria that reside there that help with detoxification, and many ‘cleanses’ can disrupt this flora.” Skip the full-on detox and get things moving with a high-fiber diet, which also fosters good bacteria, she says.



## Hair

You might have been taught to shampoo every time you get in the shower, but your hair actually looks shinier and less dry when it has a bit of natural oil. “Washing every day is too much. You need to give your scalp a chance to balance out and be the best it can be,” New York City hairstylist Elle Kinney tells *Prevention*. Try going just one more day between sudsing up. It might take your hair a couple weeks to get used to the routine, but eventually your day-two (or -three!) hair will look less greasy as your hair learns to make less oil.



## Nose

We'd never stop you from clearing out a runny nose, but there is good reason to stop digging for gold. (Yes, even if no one is looking.) (And double yes, even if you wash your hands.) Sticking your finger in your nose creates tiny scratches inside your schnoz, Dr. Voigt tells *Tech Insider*. “Some blood comes out—food for the germs—and in fact, you can increase the crusting and irritation inside by picking your nose,” he says. No thanks! When you do need to clear things out, blow one nostril at a time into a tissue to reduce the pressure of a hard nose-blow that sends phlegm into your ear passages, suggests WebMD.



## Vagina

A strange smell in your lady parts doesn't mean you have poor hygiene and should resort to douching—in fact, cleaning “down there” could just make matters worse. An infection like bacterial vaginosis could be causing the fishy smell, and douching and using scented soaps mess with the vagina's pH levels to make it even harder to kick, says Dr. Raj. The vagina is self-cleaning, so stick to the basics in the shower. “Plain water usually suffices to clean your vulva, but if you want to use a soap, make sure it is gentle and unscented,” says Dr. Raj.