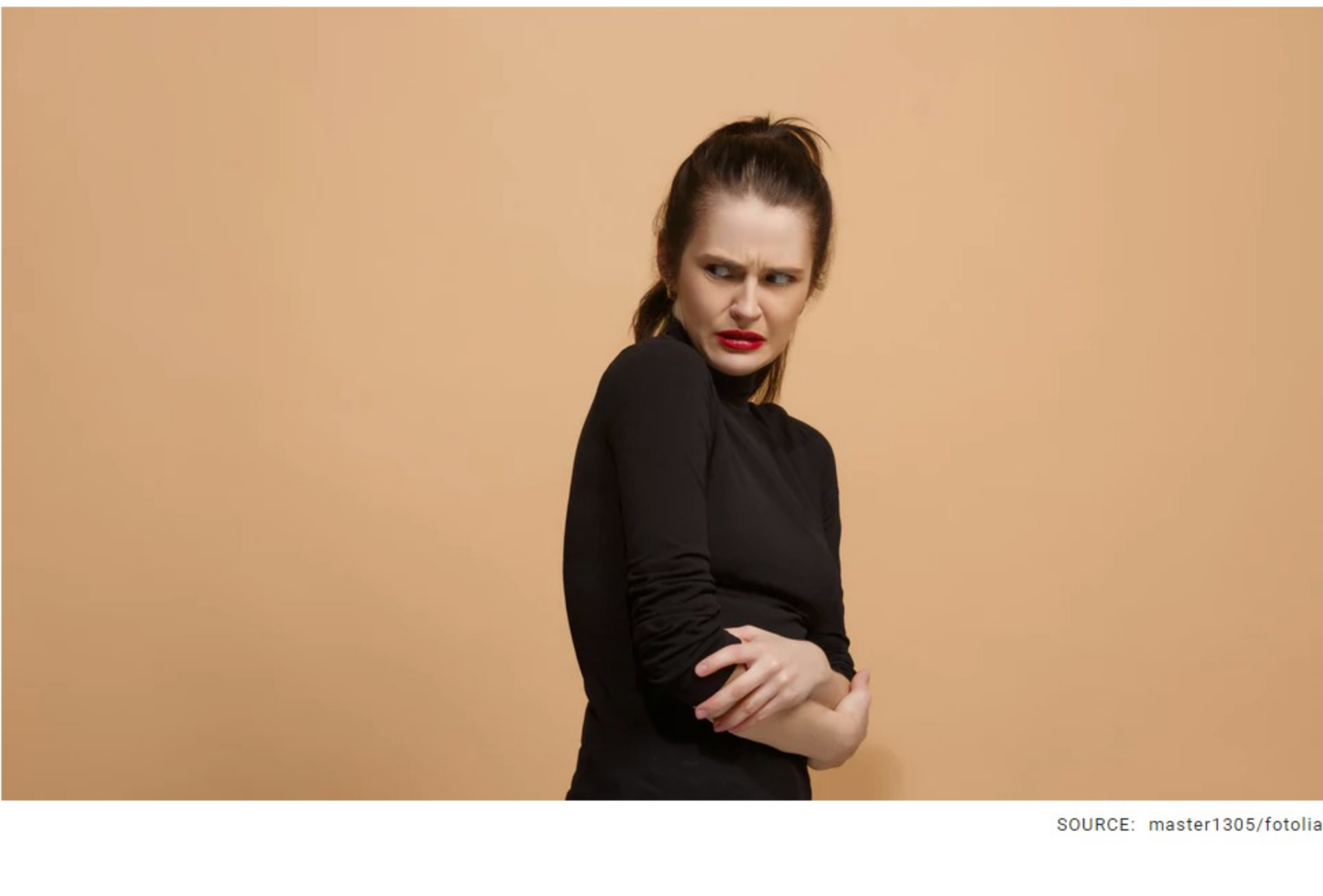




7 Gross Things Living On Your Body That Once You Know Will Haunt You Forever

By CAROLYN STEBER | 4 days ago | f



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At any given time, there are literally millions of things living on and in your body in the form of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and beyond. It can be kind of gross to think about. And it may haunt your dreams. But you know what? It's all part of being a human.

Take bacteria, for example. "We all have bacteria that live on our skin," ophthalmologist Ming Wang, MD, PhD, of Wang Vision 3D Cataract & LASIK Center, tells Bustle. "In general, this bacteria is often considered 'healthy' as it supports the normal skin function, such as secretions from glands. These healthy bacteria may also help to reduce the likelihood of overgrowth of harmful bacteria."

So even though it's kind of bizarre to image your skin crawling with tiny germs, it's actually great that they're living out their lives on your body, and keeping your health in check.

Of course, it is possible for these organisms to get out of balance, which is when you'll notice annoying side effects, such as bacterial, yeast, or fungal infections. And in those cases, you'll want to be checked out by a doctor, to make sure you're healthy. Other than that, though, you can just let these little creatures be, and try to ignore the fact they're there. Below are seven things that are living on you *right now*.

1. Mites On Your Eyelashes



Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

Believe it or not, there are multitudes of mites — known as demodex mites — living all over your body. "These are mites that live inside your hair follicles," Jena Martin, MDI, board-certified dermatopathologist, tells Bustle. "They're known to inhabit your eyebrows and eyelashes but they can be found in all the hairs on your body."

The thought of little creatures living on your eyelashes might conjure up a pretty disturbing image. But the good news is you can't see them with the naked eye, and they aren't likely to cause any problems. "It is 'natural' to have things living on the skin but the key is balance," Martin says. "Too many demodex mites may be a cause of skin conditions like rosacea or seborrheic dermatitis."

This is all thanks to a rare allergic reaction most likely caused by the mites' poop. So if you have one of these issues, definitely go see a dermatologist. "For rosacea patients with symptoms that don't improve with classic prescription treatment, your dermatologist can do a skin scraping and look for these critters under the microscope," board-certified dermatologist Tsippora Shainhouse, MD, FAAD tells Bustle. "If they are there, they can be treated with prescription anti-mite creams."

2. Yeast On Your Scalp



Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

Your body also has yeast living on it, in various locations. "Yeast are ubiquitous in the environment and can be found on your body as well most commonly on scalp and in nasolabial folds and eyebrows," Dr. Nava Greenfield, of Schweiger Dermatology Group in Brooklyn, tells Bustle. "Usually this is also not a problem but can sometimes cause skin problems if allowed to flourish, like a rash called seborrheic dermatitis." When that happens, creams prescribed by your doctor can again come to the rescue.

3. Bacteria In Your Armpits



Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

That pungent smell that occasionally wafts up from your underarms is due to bacteria, which are having a little pool party in your sweat. "These bacteria combine with the fatty acids and proteins in sweat, to create body odor," Dr. Shainhouse says. And yes, it's entirely natural.

You can, however, reduce the sweat and odor if you like. "While applying a daily antiperspirant can reduce local sweat production, keeping skin clean will reduce the bacteria build-up to help prevent bromhidrosis (aka body odor)," she says.

4. Bacteria In Your Gut



Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

Bacteria also flourish inside the body, but *especially* inside the gut. They're all part of your normal gut health, hence why we eat pre- and probiotics to help restore it — like you might do after taking antibiotics.

Those bacteria are helpful. But it really is astounding to think how much is in there. "While the diversity of microbes living within us is intrinsically linked to our overall health, the sheer volume can't be overlooked. Shockingly, the average healthy adult digestive system hosts nearly four pounds of microorganisms consisting of over three million genes," Caleb Backe, a health and wellness expert at Maple Holistics, tells Bustle. "In turn, these bacteria enjoy a comfortable and safe place to live where food is aplenty." Basically, we need them and they need us. And together, we live in harmony.

5. Fungus On Your Feet

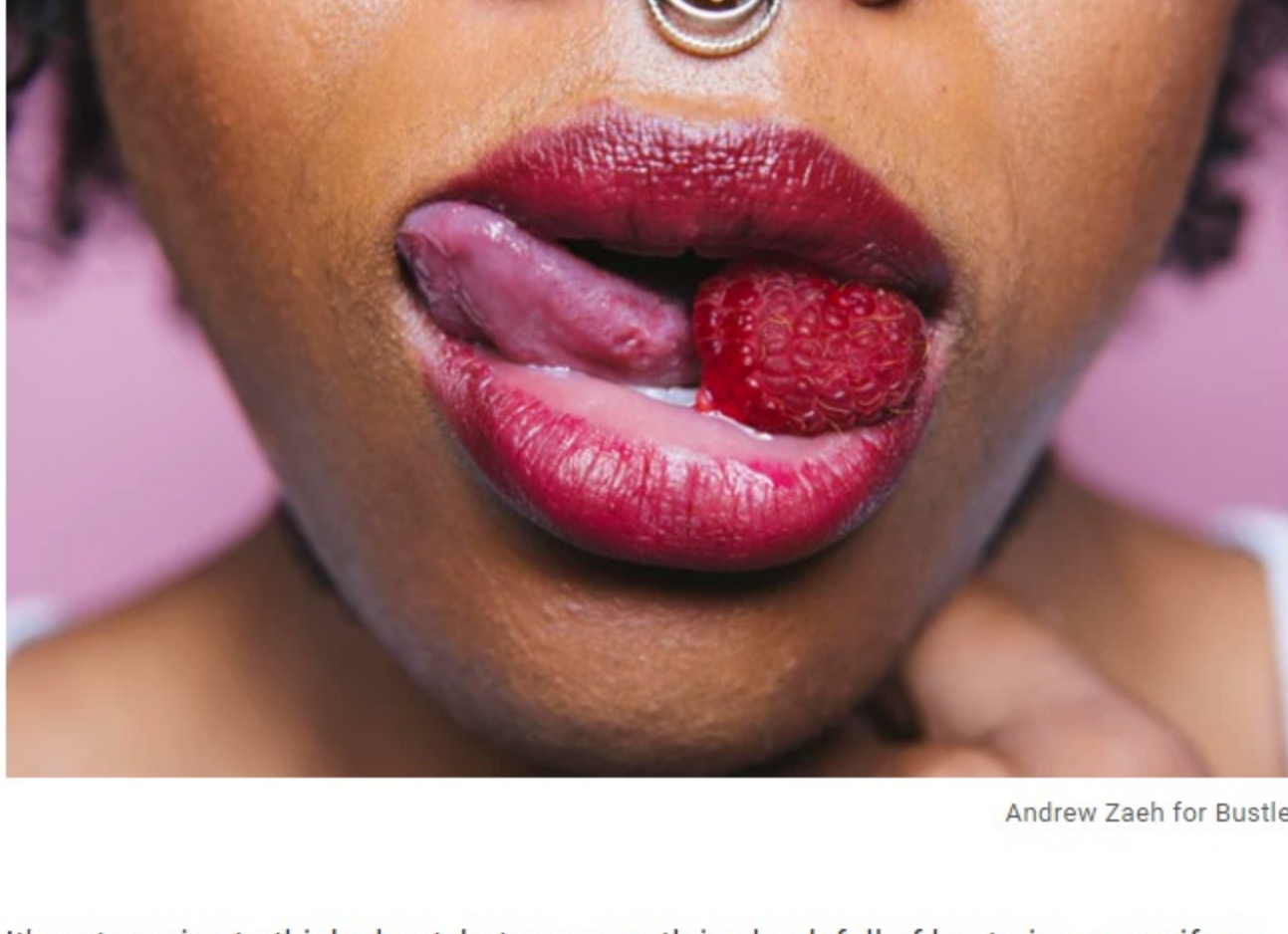


Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

Many people have fungus growing on their feet, in the form of athlete's foot. Also known as tinea pedis, it "usually looks like fine, white, dry skin on the bottoms and sides of the foot," Dr. Shainhouse says. "Don't confuse it with dry skin, because moisturizer won't treat it."

When athlete's foot is running amok, it'll be necessary to treat it with an antifungal cream to relieve the itchy symptoms. While that usually does the trick, this fungus can come back "if you also have toenail fungus, if you re-expose your feet to fungus (walking around barefoot in communal areas), or if you share space with someone else who has it," she says. "Toenail fungus (AKA, onychomycosis) is super-common and almost impossible to completely eradicate."

6. Germs In Your Mouth



Andrew Zaeh for Bustle

It's not so nice to think about, but your mouth is chock full of bacteria — even if you brush twice a day. "Bacteria naturally live in our mouth and on our teeth," Dr. Shainhouse says. "It isn't a big deal, but with poor dental care, it can lead to problems. [Bacteria] can trigger gum inflammation and mouth sores. They can contribute to bad breath. They can cause caries/cavities." And so on.

Daily dental care can help keep mouth bacteria under control, as can regular dental checkups.

7. Viruses In Your Skin



Ashley Batz/Bustle

If you have a wart growing on your skin, it's because you came in contact with the