



# Trans Patient Union

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This resource can now be found [at this link](#).



# Accessing Permanent Hair Removal (Laser and Electrolysis) as a Trans Patient in Montreal

This resource provides an overview of trans-friendly hair removal clinics in Montreal, including the different types of hair removal they provide. Our data was compiled and organized from a bilingual survey we ran on our Instagram page beginning in March 2024.

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**Disclaimer regarding discussion of skin tones:** Since laser hair removal targets melanin, different types of laser must be used for different skin tones. In both our community survey and this resource document, we use the [Fitzpatrick classification](#) of skin types to indicate which lasers are suitable for certain individuals. While this is the standard scale used in research evaluating different types of laser treatment, we recognize that it is in no way a nuanced or complete portrayal of the diversity of skin tones.

As of May 2024, all of our community survey respondents had Type I-III skin. Therefore, our patient accounts and reviews may be less applicable to individuals with type IV-VI skin.

Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV	Type V	Type VI
White skin. Always burns, never tans.	Fair skin. Always burns, tans with difficulty.	Average skin color. Sometimes mild burn, tan about average.	Light-brown skin. Rarely burns.	Brown skin. Never burns.	Black skin. Heavily pigmented. Never burns, tans very easily.

## How does permanent hair removal work?

### Laser Hair Removal

This form of hair removal uses a laser to damage hair follicles by targeting the melanin inside, preventing new hair from growing. Because it targets the melanin in hair, laser hair removal is most effective for dark hair, which contains more melanin. Additionally, because the laser targets melanin, people with darker skin have a higher risk of skin damage. However, some types of laser can be safely used on dark skin, though it is somewhat less effective than on light skin.

Laser hair removal reduces hair growth and makes hair lighter and finer, *but it will not completely remove all hair.*



## Types of Laser Hair Removal

There are four main types of lasers used for hair removal: ruby, alexandrite, Nd:YAG, and diode lasers. These lasers are distinguished by the wavelength of light they use, and the best type for each individual depends on skin and hair color. The type of laser used will depend on your skin tone as well as which type(s) the clinic offers.

Generally, ruby and alexandrite lasers work best on lighter skin, while Nd:YAG and diode are suitable for darker skin. For very dark skin (Type VI on the chart above) Nd:YAG is safer than diode. Ruby laser is generally less effective than other types and has a higher rate of side effects like skin irritation and redness. However, it can still provide good results in some patients, particularly those with light skin and dark hair. Additionally, since the technology is older, it may be lower-cost than other types of laser.

*Note: IPL, or Intense Pulsed Light, can be used to reduce hair growth in people with less melanated skin, but isn't considered a form of permanent hair removal.*

## What to Expect from Laser Hair Removal

*Note: This section provides general information on common practices for laser hair removal, based on the Mayo clinic website, a guide from a local clinic, and our own patient survey. Your provider may have different recommendations for you based on your individual situation and their practices.*

Before beginning treatments, expect to have a consultation to discuss the frequency and number of treatments you will have. During this consultation, you may want to ask about which laser types the practice uses, to ensure the laser type is effective on your skin tone. Treatments may be anywhere from a few weeks to a few months apart depending on hair thickness and location on the body. Of the patients we surveyed, most reported having 5-10 treatments, but the number will vary depending on how strongly you respond to the treatments and your desired results. The length of these appointments varies based on the area treated and the type of laser, and can range from a few minutes to over an hour.

Clinics typically require that you come to your appointment clean shaven (hair removal methods that remove the hair from the follicle, such as waxing, should not be used). Most people find laser treatments to be moderately painful; in our patient survey, the average pain reported was 5/10. There are several over-the-counter options for reducing pain during treatments, including oral pain medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) as well as topical numbing cream (typically lidocaine).

Mild skin irritation and redness is common after treatment. Aloe vera, hydrocortisone cream, and cold compresses can help reduce these symptoms; some providers also recommend not using other skincare products for the first 24 hours after treatment. Severe pain or irritation is not normal, and should be discussed with your provider or a medical



professional. Additionally, it is advisable to use sunscreen and avoid sun exposure between treatments, and especially directly after treatments when the skin is most sensitive.

It is important to note that laser hair removal will not remove all your hair; rather, it will make the growth thinner and lighter, but the results will eventually plateau as hair becomes too thin and light for the laser to effectively target. Many patients begin the hair removal process with laser, since it is cheaper and potentially less painful, and then switch to electrolysis to achieve more complete hair removal.

These sources can provide more detailed information about what to expect from a laser treatment:

- [Mayo Clinic](#)
- [Centre Ésthétique's pre-treatment and aftercare guide](#)

## Electrolysis

Electrolysis works by using a metal probe containing an electrical current to target and damage hair follicles to prevent new growth. Electrolysis generally takes longer to show results than laser, and is also significantly more expensive. However, unlike laser, it can completely prevent hair growth and works equally well for all skin and hair colours. There are several types of electrolysis.

### Types of Electrolysis

#### Galvanic

Removes hair by electrolytically catalyzing the formation of minute amounts of lye (sodium hydroxide) within the follicle, dissolving it.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Most effective, especially on coarse/thick hairs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Slowest</li><li>- Lye can cause scarring, especially if improperly treated in post</li></ul>

#### Thermolysis

Removes hair by transmitting energy from the probe tip into surrounding tissue, heating the follicle's cells until they die - essentially the same method as laser hair removal, but skipping the laser part.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Fastest</li><li>- Least painful</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Can require multiple treatments for a given follicle</li></ul>



## Blend

Combines the galvanic and the thermolytic methods together.

### Pros

- Double-dips on follicle-killing potential

### Cons

- Most painful
- Like galvanic, can cause scarring

## Micro-electrolysis

Micro-electrolysis is a term for any type of electrolysis that uses a microscope, rather than a magnifying glass, to visualize hairs and target the follicle probe. Because it reduces the number of hairs in the growth phase that are missed during a treatment, micro-electrolysis usually requires fewer treatments. It can be done with galvanic, thermolysis, or blend electrolysis.

Relatively few clinics offer micro-electrolysis in Montreal. Three of the clinics we have collected information from patients about, [Clinique Medico-Esthetique Alliance Pro MB](#), [Electrolysis Studio LIDIM](#) and [Electrolyse Maya](#), offer micro-electrolysis.

## What to expect from electrolysis

Before beginning electrolysis, expect to have a consultation to discuss how electrolysis works, the results you want, and the timing of appointments. Electrolysis sessions vary in length depending on the size of the area under treatment. Electrolysis is usually billed by the length of the appointment (in contrast to laser, which is generally billed per appointment regardless of length). Appointments are typically scheduled every 1-2 weeks, but can sometimes be up to a month apart depending on the rate of hair growth.

Electrolysis requires some hair growth to be present, so you *cannot shave between appointments*. Many providers recommend not shaving at all while receiving electrolysis treatments. Clipping longer hairs is permitted, however.

The patients we surveyed reported that electrolysis treatments are relatively painful, reporting an average pain level of 7/10. There are several over-the-counter options for reducing pain during treatments, including oral pain medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) as well as topical numbing cream (typically lidocaine).

If electrolysis proves to be too painful to manage, the rate of hair removal in a session can be done more slowly and the probe's intensity can be reduced to lessen the pain you experience. However, this does mean it will take longer overall to complete removal. Be sure to maintain an open dialogue with your electrologist about pain management.



With electrolysis, ibuprofen (or any kind of medication with blood thinning or vasodilative effects) has a chance of increasing bleeding during or immediately after treatments. The chance of this happening isn't clear, and it is generally not a serious side effect, but it may be alarming.

Electrolysis presents several unique challenges for trans people. Not being able to shave can be especially difficult when treating facial hair. Electrologists often treat only a fraction of the total hair over a large area, which helps reduce skin irritation but means that hair in that area will continue to be visible (and can't be shaved) for a long time. As an alternative, some patients receiving facial electrolysis have their practitioner treat all the hair in a small area instead. This allows them to still shave the rest of their face while treating that area.

Further, one patient noted that their electrologist feels that trans clients are more difficult to treat early in transition, although it is unclear why. We recommend finding a provider who is experienced with trans clients and their needs.

## Timing and Planning Appointments

Both laser and electrolysis require treatments to happen at regular intervals, and skipping appointments can cause you to lose progress and require more appointments in the long run. Timing laser appointments around other commitments and travel is usually doable, since the appointments are often weeks to months apart, and patients can shave in between. However, this can pose a problem for electrolysis appointments, since they are usually more frequent and shaving in between them is discouraged.

Before beginning any kind of hair removal, you should discuss the number and frequency of appointments you will likely need with your provider and agree on a schedule you can stick to. If not, you could end up spending more money and time than you'd want in order to reach your goals.

## Insurance Coverage

### RAMQ

RAMQ coverage for gender-affirming hair removal is currently unclear. The Regulation respecting the application of the Health Insurance Act (22. (c)) states that electrolysis shall not be covered "except in the case of pathological hirsutism or of folliculitis". A doctor in contact with the TPU has informed us that the RAMQ's forms for submitting claims for hair removal permit doctors to submit such claims for gender-affirming purposes, although the TPU is thus far not aware of any trans patients who have received coverage for hair removal through the RAMQ. A central difficulty in seeking coverage stems from the fact that electrolysis is generally not provided by doctors with the ability to bill the RAMQ. All of this



extends to hair removal sought for otherwise-covered surgeries that require it (such as phalloplasty).

If you have tried to get coverage for these services, whether or not you were successful, we would love to hear about your experience! We encourage you to get in touch with us via our [email](#) or [Instagram](#).

## Private Insurance

Private insurance may cover hair removal as a form of gender-affirming care. If your insurance covers it, make sure to research your coverage and any eligibility requirements. McGill and Concordia's supplemental insurance plans cover laser and electrolysis as gender-affirming procedures, but require patients to obtain a gender dysphoria diagnosis from a doctor or nurse practitioner *before* receiving any treatments.

In general, patients are expected to pay up front and request a reimbursement, as laser and electrolysis providers have no way to bill insurers directly. Insurance claims with most insurers are submitted through an online portal and can take weeks to process. Anticipate delays in processing when submitting your first claim for a new service. First claims are frequently rejected due to obscure requirements; this does not mean you are not covered, it often means your insurer requires additional information or documentation to support your claim. In particular, insurers may mistakenly reject claims if you use a name other than the name they have on file for you. Ensuring the name on your receipts matches the name on file with your insurer generally makes the process go more smoothly. Talking to someone else with the same insurer or insurance plan about their experience may help ensure you provide the insurer with everything they need on your first claim, and allow you to get more specific estimates on how long you should expect to wait for reimbursements.

Delays in processing of insurance claims may present financial difficulties, especially if you are paying up-front for services using a credit card. If this is the case, make sure to submit claims as fast as possible after your appointment to maximize the probability you will receive your reimbursement before the credit card bill comes due. It is unfortunately not unheard of for processing times to be so long as to make paying these bills on time impossible. If you are unable to make a payment deadline or are forced to carry a balance on your credit card, always remember: it is not your fault. Insurance companies should be better trained to handle these kinds of claims and should process them promptly.

Remember that other users of your insurance (i.e. dependents, or the primary beneficiary if you are yourself a dependent) may be able to see your claims for gender-affirming care on the online platform provided by your insurer, in email notifications, on paper statements sent by your insurer in the mail, or via other means. This could pose security risks if, for example,



you are covered as a dependent under a parent's private insurance plan. We encourage you to reach out to your insurer about processing claims more discreetly if this is the case.

As a general rule, insurance for these services does not cover tips. Given the high cost of services, standard percentage-based tip amounts may be substantial. Do not be afraid to resist social pressure to provide tips. Hair removal providers are, in general, very well compensated, and many are understanding of how insurance coverage can affect their clients' calculations in this respect.

If you have private insurance through work or school which does not cover gender-affirming care, it may still be possible for your insurer or another insurer to provide this coverage after contract renegotiation. If you are in this position, we encourage you to speak with representatives of your workplace or student union about extending your union's coverage if you feel safe doing so. Whether or not you intend to seek coverage for these services yourself, many others would benefit from the provision of this necessary coverage.



## Hair Removal Clinics in Montreal

Clinic Name	Laser	Electrolysis	Transphobia reported?*	Cleanliness*	Cost
<a href="#"><u>Centre Esthetique Montreal</u></a>	Y	N	N	-	\$\$
<a href="#"><u>Clinique Beauté Plus</u></a>	Y	-	Y (ignorant of trans issues; inappropriate questions)	4/5	\$
<a href="#"><u>Clinique Medico-Esthetique Alliance Pro MB</u></a>	Y	Y	N	-	\$\$
<a href="#"><u>Clinique Medico-Esthetique Epiderma</u></a>	Y	-	N	5/5	-
<a href="#"><u>Dermamode</u></a>	Y	N	N* (several years ago, an incident where a tech made blatantly transphobic comments to a client. It seems likely that this was an isolated incident)	5/5	\$\$\$
<a href="#"><u>Ekla Esthetique</u></a>	Y	Y	N	5/5	\$\$
<a href="#"><u>Electrolyse Maya</u></a>	-	Y	N (however, the provider did make racist (anti-Asian) comments to a client)	3/5	\$\$
<a href="#"><u>Electrolysis Studio LIDIM</u></a>	N	Y	N	5/5	\$\$
<a href="#"><u>ELNA Esthetique</u></a>	Y	N	N	5/5	\$\$
<a href="#"><u>ESME Esthetique</u></a>	Y	N	N	5/5	\$\$\$
<a href="#"><u>IPL Labs</u></a>	Y	N	Y (one trans woman)	-	\$



reported an unspecified "slightly transphobic experience" at the Selkirk location)						
<u><a href="#">Josee Dube Spa Urbain</a></u>	-	Y	N	5/5	\$	
<u><a href="#">Lotus Esthetique</a></u>	Y	Y	N	-	-	
<u><a href="#">Maison de GrandPre</a></u>	N	Y	N	5/5	\$\$	
<u><a href="#">Milada Beauty Salon</a></u>	-	Y	N	5/5	\$\$	
<u><a href="#">New Age Spa</a></u>	Y	N	N	-	\$\$	
<u><a href="#">Victoria Park</a></u>	Y	Y	N	5/5	\$\$\$	

*\*All ratings in this chart are compiled via TPU community-sourced survey data. More detailed information about trans-friendliness and cleanliness of clinics is described in the clinic blurbs below. If you have a different experience, please reach out to us at [resources.tpu@gmail.com](mailto:resources.tpu@gmail.com).*

## 1. Centre Esthétique Montréal

### **Laser only.**

Website: <https://www.centreesthetiquemontreal.ca/epilation-laser/>

There are two locations: one in the Village and the other in Old Port. Both locations are accessible by phone, text, and email. Both locations have 5.0 star ratings and have been well reviewed. Particularly, the Old Port location has received glowing reviews from three trans people, and both places are marked as "queer friendly" on Google maps.

Prices are accessible on their website, with a full-face session listed at \$170 plus tax per session. Appointments were available relatively soon (~1 week) after filling out the online form, and email response time was prompt. There is no requirement for a deposit or bundling of sessions.



## 2. Clinique Beauté Plus

**Offers laser;** possibly used intense pulsed light therapy without disclosing it.

Website: <https://www.cliniquebeauteplus.ca/>

The clinic has bundles for face/neck (\$300 for 6 sessions) and chest/torso (\$600 for 6 sessions) treatments. For individual sessions, it costs \$50 for face/neck and \$100 for torso/chest.

Patients report that the provider is friendly, but relatively ignorant of trans issues, and has asked them some inappropriate questions. One patient reported that they believe the clinic used intense pulsed light therapy, rather than laser, although the service was marketed as laser. Intense-pulsed light therapy is *not* the same as laser and is generally less effective. However, we are unable to verify the details of the service provided; the clinic does list both intense-pulsed light therapy and laser hair removal as services offered on its website.

## 3. Clinique Medico-Esthetique Alliance Pro MB

**Provides both electrolysis and laser.** Offers micro-electrolysis.

Website: <https://alliancepromb.com/>

As listed on their website, pricing starts from \$150/session after consultation, and they offer micro-electrolysis.

The clinic's practitioner, Boris Andrade, has received positive reviews on Google (4.6 stars) overall. However, he has been criticized by several clients, including one transfeminine individual, regarding their interactions with him. According to 1-star reviews, there are concerns about the atmosphere, with some clients feeling that Boris can be condescending and overly eager to book sessions, deviating from the standard six-week treatment cycle. Sessions take place in Boris' apartment.

## 4. Clinique Médico-Esthétique Epiderma

**Laser only.**

Website: <https://epiderma.ca/traitement/epilation-par-laser/>

Several patients in our survey had positive experiences at Epiderma, and no transphobia or other discrimination was noted. Patients reported that the staff avoided deadnaming and misgendering, and did not ask any inappropriate questions. In particular, patients we surveyed had positive experiences with Maryam Nazari and Anik De Serre.

One patient paid \$1400 for a bundle of six sessions treating the chest.



Additionally, one patient noted that the clinic is on the second floor and does not appear to have an elevator, so it may not be accessible for people who cannot climb a flight of stairs.

## 5. Dermamode

**Provides both laser and electrolysis, but they are phasing out providing electrolysis and are finishing up sessions with clients who have already started treatment.**

Website: <https://dermamode.com/en/laser-hair-removal/>

Dermamode is on the costly side, but multiple patients reported it was well worth the price due to the employees' professionalism and service provided. Based on several survey responses, Dermamode consistently uses clients' preferred names, treated patients who showed up in differently gendered clothing respectfully, and acknowledged trans identities with minimal questions and fuss. Diana, one of the providers, was noted to be very kind, efficient, and trans-positive to a patient getting pre-bottom surgery hair removal.

Despite generally positive experiences, we did hear from one patient that one tech, Audrey, made very transphobic comments directly to them. This occurred several years ago, and based on other patients' reports, we believe (and hope) that this was probably an isolated incident, but we do not know whether the tech still works at Dermamode.

Average costs run about \$180-220 for a full face treatment (depending on whether you purchase a bundle), and roughly \$250 per appointment for other body parts. They typically offer packages of 4-6 sessions; if you need more than 6 sessions, they will charge the discounted package rate (about 15% off) for the remaining sessions. You can pay full price upfront or in two installments. They require a 48 hour advance notice for cancellations, and booking requires you to provide your credit/debit card information to charge in case of a no-show.

## 6. Êkla Esthétique

**Provides both laser and electrolysis.**

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/eklaesthetique/>

A bundle of twelve laser treatments on the face and neck costs over \$100 per session. The clinic also offers electrolysis, but we were not able to get information about pricing or other practices.

One patient reported a positive experience with laser treatments here, noting that the practitioner, Jenny, was very friendly and kind, though she asked a few invasive questions.



## 7. Electrolyse Maya

***Electrolysis only. Offers micro-electrolysis.***

Website: <https://www.electrolysemaya.com/>

Electrolyse Maya is one of only a few clinics in Montreal that offer micro-electrolysis.

One patient had a very negative experience at this clinic. They reported that the provider (Maya) made anti-Asian comments (not directed at them) during their appointment, which caused them to stop going. When they switched clinics, they experienced less irritation after treatments, and felt that the new clinic was more hygienic.

Another patient we talked to had a positive experience at this clinic.

## 8. Electrolysis Studio LIDIM

***Electrolysis only, blend type. Offers micro-electrolysis.***

Website: <https://www.montrealelectrolysis.com/>

Located in St. Laurent, their prices start at \$30 for 15 minutes, but longer periods of time have a lower hourly rate (as low as \$75/h for 4+ hour sessions, though this is considerably longer than most patients will need). Patients have reported no issues regarding transphobia and said that the provider, Dimi, is quiet and doesn't tend to ask questions. One patient reported that he was "refreshingly uninterested in my transition."

Electrolysis Studio LIDIM offers micro-electrolysis. Additionally, one patient told us that they are the only electrolysis studio in Montreal that offers micro-electrolysis for the genital area, notable for those interested in electrolysis pre-bottom surgery.

## 9. ELNA Esthetique

***Laser only.***

Website: <https://elnamedical.com/services/esthetics>

ELNA appears to be a popular but pricier option. According to one patient, they have a provider named Ty who's trans herself. They offer laser hair removal at both of their locations, McGill/Old Port and Côte des Neiges/Décarie Square.

One patient reported paying \$1050 for three treatments for lower face, legs, and bikini.



## 10. ESME Esthétique

**Laser only.**

Website: <https://micro-esthetique.com/>

One patient's provider was very professional and didn't ask any questions. They paid about \$220 per session for treatments on their face and neck.

## 11. IPL Labs

**Provides laser and intense pulsed light treatment.**

Website: <https://ipllab.com/>

They have two locations in St. Denis and Selkirk. One trans woman reported a "slightly transphobic experience" at the Selkirk location, and one trans man said they are nice at the St. Denis location. One patient was quoted \$460 (including tax) for 8 sessions for pre-phalloplasty hair removal. Another patient claimed it's the cheapest clinic for laser hair removal.

## 12. Josée Dubé Spa Urbain

**Provides electrolysis.**

Website: <https://joseedubespaurbain.ca/>

The provider, Caroline Martin, was very kind, caring, understanding, and trans-positive, though there were some communication difficulties due to a language barrier. They have experience with trans clients. One patient paid \$66.69 per hour, and another patient reported \$28 per session for face treatment.

## 13. Lotus Esthetique

**Provides laser, IPL, and electrolysis.**

Website: <https://lotusesthetique.com/>

Lotus Esthetique is located close to Vendome. One patient reported a very positive experience there.

This clinic only takes cash or E-Transfer, so be sure to get a receipt if you're being reimbursed by insurance..



## 14. Maison de GrandPré

***Electrolysis only.***

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/MaisonDeGrandPre/>

Run by a practitioner named Genevieve who sounded very friendly on the phone. This clinic sees a lot of trans patients and doesn't make a big deal about the trans status of their clients.

Price list as of Spring 2024: \$32 for 10 minutes, \$42 for 15 minutes + \$5 per additional 5 minutes (up to one hour/\$87).

## 15. Milada Beauty Salon

***Provides electrolysis (galvanic).***

Website: <https://milada.com/montreal/>

The average cost per session is around \$100 for treatments on the face. The patient commented that the providers are very knowledgeable and committed to giving patients the best results.

A patient reported an extremely professional and pleasant experience with Stephanie, who was very trans positive despite being unsure about correct trans etiquette at times.

## 16. New Age Spa

***Laser only.***

Website: <https://newagespa.ca/>

Two patients had a positive experience with Chyanne, who was very trans-positive, kind, reassuring, and let the patient take breaks if needed.

## 17. Victoria Park

***Provides both laser and electrolysis***

Website: <https://vicpark.com/>

They have four locations: downtown, Westmount, Old Montreal, and East Montreal.

The average cost is around \$150-\$200 per session. Allegedly, they are the only permanent hair removal clinic with doctors on staff. One patient says they are expensive, but they have a student discount of 20% and a touch up discount of 50% (according to one patient, this applies after a certain number of appointments, not based on the amount of hair left).

The laser provider Jenifer Ercoli was described as "very kind and trans affirming."



## Other Resources

- <https://www.pointofpride.org/blog/electrolysis-vs-laser-hair-removal-an-intro-for-trans-folks>
- <https://transcare.ucsf.edu/guidelines/hair-removal> (kind of technical, but a good overview of laser and electrolysis for trans people specifically)