

Headline	Hazards Of Wearing Shapewear		
MediaTitle	The Straits Times (Urban) (Fri)		
Date	13 Apr 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	Urban	Circulation	352,000
Page No	22	Readership	1,380,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	351 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	S\$ 8,156
Frequency	Weekly	PR Value	S\$ 8,156





HAZARDS OF WEARING SHAPEWEAR

Wearing shapewear that is too tight or for too long can have adverse effects on your health:

- Nerve compression, which might lead to numbness in the lower limbs and back pain.
- The excessive pressure can cause stomach acids to flow back to the oesophagus, leading to a burning sensation in the chest or throat called acid reflux. Shapewear that covers the abdomen is especially notorious for causing acid reflux.
- Fainting and shortness of breath. Tight undergarments, such as corsets and bustiers, restrict the lungs' ability to expand, making breathing shallow and leading to a decrease in oxygen intake.
- Blood clots may occur when there are tight elastic bands on the calves or thighs. The bands impinge on the vital blood vessels and could restrict blood flow to these areas. This might lead to deep vein thrombosis, which is potentially fatal.
- Shapewear may be used to aid the healing process of an injured lower back or one that has gone through surgery. It

helps maintain a good posture but being overly reliant on shapewear is counter-productive as it could lead to the atrophy of back-stabilising muscles, resulting in stiffness and loss of flexibility.

- Yeast infections could also occur when a woman's nether regions are kept under tight and restrictive clothing for long periods of time. Warm and moist environments are breeding grounds for bacteria and fungi. The tropical climate here does not help. Warning signs include itchiness, pain and inflammation in the pubic area.
- Tight undergarments cause excessive pressure and friction on the skin. When the skin cannot breathe and the environment is hot and humid, boils, sweat rash, blackheads and whiteheads may appear.
- Although there is no clear-cut rule to the number of hours you should wear shapewear, listen to your body and look out for signs of discomfort and irritation. Stop wearing the garments and consult a doctor if necessary.

Information from Dr Harneet Ranu Eriksson, consultant and specialist in dermatology at the Raffles Skin Centre

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