

7 | WHY MEN HAVE NIPPLES, AND MY SEX CHANGE STORY

How beautiful maleness is, if it finds its right expression.

DH Lawrence 1885-1930 English author, poet, playwright, essayist and literary critic

Why do men have nipples? It's an age-old question to which we now have the answer, but before I reveal it I'd like to present the result of a Google search I undertook in September 2011, using that very question. The search purportedly found 1.81 million 'hits', which is surely a testament to the dysfunctional times we live in. The first 'hit' was a page on the *Guardian* website where people post questions and others post answers. The question, 'Why do men have nipples?' was posed by one Hilda Bird of Lagos, Portugal.

The following is a selection of my favourites from among the answers posted by visitors to the *Guardian* website, and I should like to thank them warmly.

'Why do men have nipples?'

To help our creator to put the breastbone right in the middle.

Louis van de Geijn, Renkum, Netherlands

Because we are built to a common pattern. But in the process, female breasts happen to be more prominent!

Jhune Catubag, Parañaque, Philippines

Men have nipples because they'd look plain wrong without them.

Morven Gailey aged 7, Stroud, England

Men's nipples are purely there to indicate temperature, and a jolly good way of chastisement, a good tweek can stop even the naughtiest behaviour.

Janine Bailey, Oxford

I was short on male platty fish so I stole one from where I work. After about a month it turned into a female. Evidently some creatures can change gender after birth. Nipples are there just in case.

Peter Johnson, Stockton, Cleveland

I'm not really sure why but I'm so glad I have mine to tweak, at work or on the bus. Sometimes on the toilet reading the paper or while watching my neighbours through their window. They bought a rowing machine.

Andrew Anderson, Pakuranga, Auckland, New Zealand

The same reason women have beards!

Graham Foskett, Treakele, Bumstead

Men have nipples because they help men find water. Walk to where they point and when they cross, you're above water! Simple. Mainly why men drink so much beer, I guess.

Aaron Goodwin, Middle of England

Because people like me need something to play with when bored...

Adam Newsham, Preston

Because nipples are a turn-on.

Malika Othman, Scunthorpe

Something else for the female to suck on. ;P

Lucy Campbell, Rugby, Warwickshire

So when there's no boobs around you can pretend your a woman and play with yourself ;D

Dean, Jack and Connor, Derby, England

So if a man decides to have a sex change it makes the surgeon's job easier?

Harry Machin, Burslem, UK

Because without them men would get jealous.

Bethanie Lucas, Manchester

So my girlfriend (with her Jedi powers) can flick them both square on and make me cry like a girl.

Louis Wood, Wellington, UK

Oh my, some people are odd...

Sara Rickard, Newry, Ireland

Vestigiality – one of the strongest evidences for the Theory of Evolution. Creationism can never explain nipples in men, wisdom teeth, vermiform appendix etc.

Steve Martin, New York USA

The male nipple is an erogenous zone; manipulation of it during sexual interaction greatly increases the pleasure. I am an older male posing naked for art classes; never mind erections... my nipples (enlarged over the years from being handled) have been found more of a sexual turn-on during these sessions.

Edo Deweert, Rimbey, Canada'

[Author's note: Edo, have you never heard of the expression 'too much information'?]

Needless to say, someone then had to spoil it all with the correct answer:

'All humans begin life in the womb as females. If no Y chromosome is present in the foetus, then the embryo will continue to develop as and be born as a female. If there is a Y chromosome present in the embryo, the male sex hormone testosterone restricts the full development of breasts to just nipples, the labia fuse to become the scrotum and clitoris develops fully to become a penis. If the Y chromosome prevails in producing a male, this is not done without a fight. Male babies are weaker as a result than female ones, accounting for the slightly higher death rate in male babies.

Terence Hollingworth, Blagnac, France'

Terence Hollingworth: a fine French name. So let me get the details of my sex change right. In the womb I started off being of the female persuasion, but having a Y chromosome meant I

converted to the male persuasion. Phew. That was a close shave. I have a contrary nature – as my ex-wives might possibly confirm – and without a Y chromosome I might have been called Michaela, become a feminist, and admired Harriet Harman. It's the stuff of nightmares.