

Comparative Test



Shaving Creams

All good, but is there a better one out there?

How do you decide or know which is 'your' best shaving cream? Among other things, it must be about the fragrance and the froth, the skin-friendliness and beard-softening quotient, and of course the 'experience' thing, right? Shaving creams also have the very important function of ensuring that you get the least, if any, nicks and cuts in the act of shaving. All of these attributes are determined by the composition of the shaving cream, for which the national standards have specified parameters and limits. For instance, water content in a shaving cream should not be more than 60 per cent of the total mass of the cream. How that may affect the quality of the product is one of the things consumers should be aware of, since a cream with high water content will just mean less value for money. The following report will put the spotlight on eight popular brands of shaving creams (lather type) that we have tested and assessed along parameters that determine their performance, quality and safety aspects.

A Consumer Voice Report

We tested the eight brands on parameters such as total fatty substance, lathering power, water content, stability, consistency, homogeneity, free caustic alkali, microbiological contamination and presence of the heavy metals arsenic and lead.

The samples were tested as per Indian Standard 9740 and other related standards. The tests were conducted at an NABL-accredited laboratory.

BRANDS TESTED

Rank	Total Score out of 100 (rounded off)	Brand	Quantity (gm)	MRP (Rs)	Best before (months)	Manufactured/Marketed by
1	96	Old Spice	70 gm	60	24	Procter & Gamble Hygiene and Health Care Pvt. Ltd
2	95	Gillette	93.1 (70 + extra 33%)	69	36	Procter & Gamble Home Product Pvt. Ltd
3	93	Meister	70 + 70 gm (buy 1, get 1 free)	75	24	Reliance Retail Ltd
3	93	Dettol	60 + 18 (30% extra) (78 gm)	75	24	Reckitt Benckiser (India) Ltd
4	89	Vi-John	70 + 21 gm free = 91 gm	60	36	Vi-John Group
5	88	Godrej	100 gm	60	24	Godrej Consumer Products Ltd
6	87	Axe	60 + 18 gm (extra 30%) (78 gm)	65	24	Hindustan Unilever Ltd
6	87	Park Avenue	60 + 24 gm (40% extra) = 84 gm	65	36	Sneh Sagar Enterprises

Score Rating: >90: very good*****, 71-90: good****, 51-70: fair***, 31-50: average**, up to 30: very poor*



**CV RECOMMENDATION | TOP PERFORMER |
BEST IN SENSORY TESTS
OLD SPICE**



**VALUE FOR MONEY
Meister**

Key Findings

- Based on the overall test findings, Old Spice is the top performer and is followed by Gillette and Meister.
- Meister is the value-for-money brand.
- Old Spice is the top scorer in the sensory tests, followed by Meister and Park Avenue.
- Total fatty substance, the key ingredient in a shaving cream, was found highest in Old Spice, followed by Gillette and Dettol.
- Godrej and Axe, followed by Meister, generated the highest quantity of lather.
- All tested brands cleared the tests for microbiological safety and presence of heavy metals.
- Six out of the eight brands had promotional schemes with extra free cream. At the same time, consumers should note the significant variation in maximum retail prices while choosing their brand.

Comparative Test

Shaving cream is a toiletry product that is used prior to the shaving to wet and soften the beard. The rich foam it produces helps to hold the facial hair erect for cutting. Shaving creams are basically soaps composed of sodium and potassium stearate, mixed with water and glycerol to give a creamy texture. As per Indian Standard, there are two types of shaving creams: Type 1 – lather and Type 2 – brushless.

Performance of the shaving cream is related to the quality of the shaving brush. Shaving brush made of natural hair (animals) is long-lasting and make rich lather as compared to synthetic (nylon) hair brushes.

TEST RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY

Total fatty substance | Lathering power | Water content | Free caustic alkali | Stability | Consistency | Homogeneity | Heavy metals | Microbiological safety

◆ Total fatty substance (TFS)

Indian Standard has stipulated that shaving cream must have at least 30 per cent fatty substance.

- All brands had more fatty substance than the minimum requirement of 30 per cent.
- TFS was found highest in Old Spice (39.83 per cent), followed by Gillette (39.43 per cent) and Dettol (38.56 per cent).
- Axe had the lowest TFS among the lot, but with 31.92 per cent it too complied with the minimum requirement.

The smoothness of the shave depends on the moisturizing and lather-producing ability of the shaving cream. The lathering and moisturizing potential, in turn, depends much on the 'total fatty substance' in the cream as well as a balanced quantity of water.



◆ Lathering power

The national standard stipulates that there be at least 100 ml of lather whipped up by a shaving cream (in a measuring cylinder for a fixed quantity).

- All brands generated lather far more than the minimum requirement. Godrej and Axe generated the highest quantity of lather (360 ml), followed by Meister (345 ml).

The foam or lather that a shaving cream generates makes for a better experience while shaving. A shaving cream is basically soap, so good lathering power is essential.

◆ Water content

The national standards stipulate that water content should not be more than 60 per cent of the total mass of the cream.

- All brands had much lower water content than the 60 per cent limit set by the standards.
- Water content was least in Park Avenue (28.84 per cent) and highest in Vi-John (43.45 per cent).

A shaving cream that has high water content is easy to judge even in regular use. The cream will be less compact and if you put it on your finger, it will start to lose its form because of high water content in it. Besides, with high water content you will need to apply more cream to work up a reasonably rich lather. At the same time, water content is an inseparable part of shaving cream – it maintain its consistency which in turn influences the product's physical properties such as weight, density, viscosity and lathering action.

Lower water content is an indicator of high active ingredients, and vice versa.

Stability | Consistency | Homogeneity

Stability means the shaving cream will not segregate or physically deteriorate during normal condition of storage and use.

Consistency requires the shaving cream to be in the form of a thick emulsion with soft texture and steady consistency. It shall be white, off-white/cream, or pigmented, and of a uniform colour.

Homogeneity requires the shaving cream to be able to extrude from the collapsible tube at 27 °C (± 2 °C) in the form of a homogeneous mass, with the application of normal force starting from the crimped end of the tube.

All brands complied with the requirements.

Free caustic alkali | Heavy metals | Microbiological safety

Free caustic alkali (can cause irritation and rashes on skin) and the heavy metals lead and arsenic were not detected in any of the tested brands. All brands also comply with the required limits for microbiological counts.



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PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY SCORES

Parameters	Weightage (%)	Old Spice	Gillette	Meister	Dettol	Vi-John	Godrej	Axe	Park Avenue
Total fatty substance	25	24.83	24.43	22.55	23.56	20.10	18.05	16.92	18.20
Lathering power	15	13.42	13.63	13.84	12.69	12.69	14.16	14.16	11.85
Water content	7	5.72	5.66	5.75	5.77	5.36	5.69	5.76	6.38
Free caustic alkali	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Stability	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Consistency	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Homogeneity	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Heavy metals	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Microbiological tests									
Total viable count (TVC)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Coliform count	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

FOR SENSORY ATTRIBUTES

The sensory tests were conducted involving selected members to assess consumers' preferences. Members used warm water and brushes for application of the cream and used the samples like any other consumer would. The shaving creams were duly masked and coded to avoid any bias by user.

Post experiencing the creams, the panellists gave comments on the various attributes including flavour, consistency, homogeneity, lathering ability, softening quality and overall acceptability. The testing team

noted the critical observations and calculated and rated the mean values on a percentage scale.

- Old Spice was rated as the best, followed by Meister and Park Avenue.
- Godrej shaving cream scored lowest.

Brand	Score out of 15
Old Spice	13.76
Meister	13.59
Park Avenue	13.26
Vi-John	13.13
Dettol	13.01
Axe	12.88
Gillette	12.78
Godrej	12.11



FOR GENERAL QUALITIES

◆ Marking/Labelling

The following particulars are required to be mentioned on the product:

- a) Name and type of shaving cream
- b) Manufacturer's name and/or recognized trademark, if any
- c) Net mass of the material in tube
- d) Batch number (in code or otherwise)
- e) Any other requirement as prescribed by the statutory authorities
- f) Instructions for use and storage
- g) 'Best before' date

The product may also carry the ISI certification mark.

- *Except for Old Spice and Gillette, none of the brands specify instructions for use.*
- *All other details have been provided by the brands on their label/packaging.*

Net weight of all brands was within the permissible limits. As per the Standards of Weights and Measures Rules, the maximum permissible error for shaving creams up to 50 gm is 1 gm and for up to 100 gm it is 2 gm.

◆ Packing

As per Indian Standard, the shaving cream shall be packed in a suitable container (flexible plastic bottle,

sachet, etc.) with a tube that is properly crimped. The cap shall be leak-proof. The tube, if necessary, may further be packed in a carton or any other suitable material.

- *All tested brands have tubes that are collapsible and made of PVC-type flexible material. These are further packed in hard paper box.*

The collapsible tube in which the shaving cream is packed shall not corrode or deteriorate during normal conditions of storage and use. For the test, we first examined the samples visually by extruding part of the contents. Next we checked the internal surface of the tube after slitting it open and removing the remaining contents.

All eight brands came out well.

A good lather shaving cream should –

- a) Produce a rich lather composed of small bubbles.
- b) Be non-irritant.
- c) Have good wetting properties.
- d) Be smooth, soft and free from lumps.
- e) Adhere readily to both face and brush and yet be easily removed on rinsing.
- f) Retain a satisfactory consistency and texture through all temperature conditions.



Dear readers: We are open to hearing your suggestions on products and services that you believe should be reviewed/tested by Team Consumer Voice. You may write to cpt@consumer-voice.org