Risky Business: Black Women's Hair Care Routines Can Actually Hurt Them

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Infrequent shampooing; too frequent use of relaxers, blow-dryers and hot combs; and styles that require excessive manipulation of the hair. Not only are these culprits disastrous for African-American women's tresses—they also do a number on their health, according to press materials from Henry Ford Hospital's Multicultural Dermatology Clinic in Detroit and reported by HealthDay News.

To avoid hair loss problems such as alopecia and diseases such as seborrheic dermatitis (an inflammatory skin condition), black women must practice proper hair care programs, said Diane Jackson-Richards, MD, the clinic's director.

As a way to skirt these hairy issues, Jackson-Richards offered the following grooming tips to women:

Detangle hair with a wide-tooth comb while tresses are drenched in conditioner.

Opt for natural hair oils such as jojoba, olive, shea or coconut.

Allow two weeks to pass between relaxing and coloring hair.

Wash braided or dreadlocked hair every two weeks; don't wear too-tight braids; and never sport braided styles for more than three months.

But Jackson-Richards also said dermatologists can help black women protect their hair and health. How? By becoming more aware of black women's hair and scalp issues, and more familiar with culturally acceptable treatments for the diseases that target these areas.

Is scalp itch one of your concerns? Click here to read more about what might be causing this common problem.

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