Hair Journeys

September 5, 2008 By Gennifer Miller

I discovered I had the “D word” one hot summer day in 2006. I reached over to adjust my purse strap when I noticed a group of flakes on my shoulder. I gasped…is that DANDRUFF?! I panicked, raced home and spent the next few hours glued to the Internet.

I learned that dandruff is a type of scalp- or skin-related disease and is associated with a tiny fungus called pityrosporum ovale. This fungus lives on our scalp naturally but can lead to dandruff when teamed with certain external (direct heat-styling methods, use of alcohol-intensive, overly harsh styling products, etc.) and internal (stress, poor diet, lack of sleep, etc.) “triggers.”

At this time, I was still a student (translation: remove “lack of sleep” and “stress” from above list) and was using natural products and minimal heat styling to maintain my hair. As a result, I reluctantly decided to focus on my diet, which consisted of a lot of processed foods and sugary drinks.

I put myself through a nutrition boot camp. I drank 64 ounces of water daily and incorporated a lot of foods with B vitamins, such as meats, whole grains, vegetables and nuts, which, I found out, can help control dandruff and dry scalp. I started exercising and wetting my scalp daily, sealing in the moisture with a few drops of coconut oil. Within a month, I was able to enjoy the summer with a flake-free scalp and a wonderful new complexion. I haven’t had to google the “D word” since.

Gennifer Miller is the founder of Healthytextures.com, a website advocating a do-it-yourself approach to healthier hair. Her website features dozens of tips, articles and videos on healthy hairstyling and maintenance.

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