

Cancer Answers

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Hair Care and Treatment: before ... during ... and after

Before - if possible you should start taking extra care of your hair prior to beginning treatment. Bleaching, coloring or perming your hair will weaken it. Your body, skin and hair need to be as healthy as possible to withstand the stress of treatment. Additionally, using curling irons, hot rollers and hair dryers will dry your hair - so limit your use of these appliances. Changing to a natural shampoo is also a wise choice. The last thing your hair needs for the next many months are harsh chemicals being applied to it daily. There are wonderful natural shampoos available but always read the labels before purchasing. Some manufacturers hide potentially harmful ingredients behind the word "natural". Liquid castile soap is an excellent option for both your hair and skin. Check out countryrosespa.com or pick up a bottle of Dr Bronner's at your local grocery store. Honest - it cleans beautifully without stripping your skin and hair of natural oils and it is extremely reasonable. By following these suggestions it may be possible to keep your hair a little longer once you are in treatment.

I know you have heard it before, but cutting your hair is also a good option prior to treatment. Short hair looks fuller and partial hair loss will not be as noticeable with shorter hair.

During - once you have begun treatment, baby whatever hair you have. Using a satin pillowcase will lessen your chances of hair catching and pulling out while you sleep. If you brush your hair use a soft bristle brush and slow strokes. Consider skipping a washing if your hair is not showing signs of being dirty or oily. Shaving your head if you have lost a considerable amount of hair is a great choice. It will save the embarrassment of "shedding" in public and potentially reduce some irritation that can occur during treatment.

After you have finished treatment - which I congratulate you on! - treat your beautiful new growth with kid gloves. You should not bleach or color your hair with a chemically produced coloring for at least six months following completion of treatment. Natural colorants, such as henna or vegetable products are safe and gentle enough to use once treatment has ended, however, try to wait as long as possible before dyeing your hair with one of them. The ingredients, though natural, can still interact with the residual chemicals in your body and cause unpredictable - and perhaps unbecoming, results. Here are a couple of natural colorant brands to try: Herbatint, Aubrey Organics and Light Mountains Natural Hair Color at local natural grocers Robert Craig at robertcraig.com. If you are not a "color-it-yourselfer" ask around or search the web to find a local salon that uses natural hair coloring. They are not easy to find, but they are out there if you look hard enough.

One last option is to use a tinted styling mousse. I haven't found a totally natural one yet, but I am sure there is one available. Although it won't cover gray hair very effectively, it offers a pretty, temporary alternative that is quick if you aren't trying to cover a head full of gray hair.

Enjoy your crowning glory - keep it natural and have some FUN!

A New Year Thought

I have been mulling something over the past few weeks that warrants sharing because, I believe, it has value for everyone in every season of life.

Do you know, that the top eight resolutions people made for 2009 are the same as those that were made for 2008? Why is that, do you suppose?

I believe that it is because we, as a society, often lack discipline in personal areas of our lives. We are so stressed and consumed with the schedules and disciplines we must keep in our professional worlds, that our personal worlds become a place where we, incorrectly, feel we can indulge ourselves without major consequences. Our health and relationships suffer because of it.

Why do we make resolutions anyway? To make us feel better about ourselves because of what we plan to accomplish. We continue to believe that if we improve our lives in these ways, then our lives will be more meaningful and we will be happier. The reality of New Year resolutions is that they just don't work.

God tells us in the Bible to live one day at a time. He promises to provide us grace for that day and that day only. What wonderful news! Trying to make resolutions to last a year will fail because we only have grace to see us through each day as it comes. We are to make a decision each day (not once a year) to live our lives in such a way as will improve our lives and others. God's gift of salvation through Jesus is the best "improvement" possible and sharing it with others...well, what a wonderful way to live! We can be certain that we have God's strength and grace as we choose to follow Him day-by-day in 2009.