

AU NATUREL

Schatzi's Design Gallery & Day Spa, LLC, 5224 Knightsbridge Way, Raleigh, NC, 27609
Web: www.schatzisdayspa@aol.com; E-mail: schatzisdayspa@aol.com; Phone: (919)844-1933 or (919)844-2867



Spring has sprung new specials

Two things that I absolutely MUST do when I retire (from monitoring my computer monitor): 1) become a certified mid-wife (following in the tradition of my Grandmother Clara Hawthorne of Bay Minette, AL (may she rest in peace); and 2) become a bird-watcher. Okay, I don't have to wait for the 2nd one. But, I'm only recently discovering this burgeoning love of mine. The attached photo is of a cedar waxwinger. I saw an "earful or museum" (meaning a pack) of these birds the other day as I walked from the bus stop to my office. I was mesmerized. Where has this bird been my whole life?! They're absolutely beautiful and this was the first I've ever seen it! It was so graceful and the black mask is "to die for! Waaayyy cool!" If I had ever seen this bird before, I would surely have remembered! So, I looked all around me, as I had walked into the midst of the *earful*, and I marveled. When I got to my monitor, I was determined to find the name of this bird!!! Did you know there are over 460 species of birds in North Carolina?! Well, needless to say, my task was surely a daunting one as I had no name as a reference. As I combed through a plethora of photos and references, I KNEW the information would come to me somehow and quickly. I WAS at work, after all! And then, VOILA! I clicked on the [attached link](#) and out of ALL of the 460 bird species to be pictured on this website's home page; I found the object of my desire! It was indeed a poetic moment! "Ask and it shall be given". Some moments are so beautifully poetic and so simple. I smiled and smile on reflection. ☺

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Well, I say all of that to say that spring has sprung! And so have the sisters. Ladies are all about a fresh look right now so come check us out and benefit from our spring special: **Get a Free Deep Condition AND a Trim when you add these services to any style of \$50.00 or more. That's a \$25.00 savings! This special is good through the end of March!**

For this month's issue of Au Naturel, there are a number of health related articles that you may find interesting. In addition, I included a poem from last month's Poetically Correct poetry sharing night that was written by my own brother. I didn't know he wrote poetry too so I was definitely psyched to discover his talent! By way of general updates, **the March session of Poetically Correct will be held on Thursday, March 15th at 7pm here at Schatzi's.** Hope to see you there! Also, the [Baltimore Natural Hair Care Expo](#) will be on March 24th and 25th. **The tour is scheduled to stop in Raleigh on June 16th.** Mark your calendars!

Relay for Life; Donate or Click & Share a Link to Help Save One

Renate Bender, one of our salon clients, is seeking donations for the following very worthy cause:

"This year, over 1.4 million Americans will hear the words "You have cancer". I know too many people who are touched by cancer, and that is why I have joined the American Cancer Society on a mission to save lives and create a world with more birthdays by participating in the Relay For Life in my community. At Relay For Life we celebrate loved ones who have won their battle against cancer, remember those who are no longer with us, and fight back against this disease that touches so many. I am determined to make a difference, and I hope you will join me. I will be walking on **May 19, 2012, 10:00am, Cary High School.**

Please, support me in my efforts by using the link below to visit my personal web page and make a donation. Every dollar raised brings us one dollar closer to a cure and to a time when the number of people who have to hear the words "you have cancer" is zero.

Thank you so much for your support. Together, we ARE saving lives! Renate' [Click here to visit her PERSONAL page.](#)

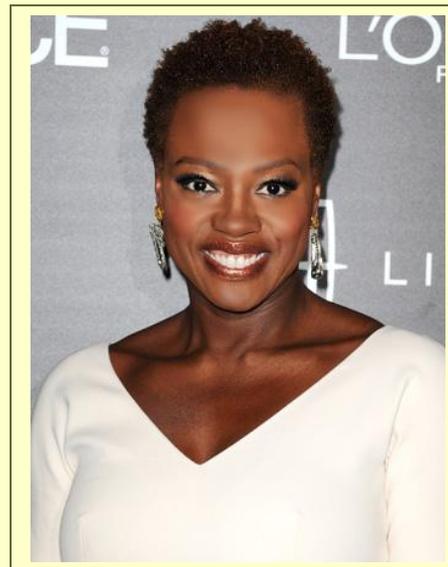
Please be sure to proceed carefully while making donations so that her team is credited with your donation. If you're unsure, please send her a comment on her personal page to let her know.

Please see *Cancer Resources* on page 4

For Viola Davis: Authenticity wins out on Oscar Night

The movie “The Help” was definitely a keeper for 2011! In fact, my husband even liked it! We usually go for the more fast-paced adventures, like “[In Time](#)” (AWESOME!!!!!!!!!!) or “[Adjustment Bureau](#)” (Great potential, inspiring message, but cheesy ending. But then in my book, Matt Damon can do no wrong—particularly “off screen”: Check out his extra-curricular activities!!!--[water.org](#)). Anyway, “The Help” was a definite departure from our usual fare but came highly recommended by a friend.... My girlfriend saw it twice AND read the book! Besides when my own Dad says he cried during a movie, “Well, this I gotta’ see!” ☺

So, I was delighted to hear that Viola Davis chose to “come home” on the red carpet by sporting her natural hair to possibly take home *Gold* for this blockbuster hit. It seems her decision was “all the buzz” at the Oscars! Imagine: Wearing your natural adornment is a subject for discussion in Hollywood! We’ve clearly still got a ways to go. But I’m not worried. Some things are just inevitable. Isn’t she divine! While she didn’t win the Oscar, she definitely scored for authenticity. For more details about her decision, check out [this full article](#) or [this one](#). Now when a sister can take the Oscar wearing the natural “on screen” AND “off”, then THAT will be something to talk about! Hopefully by then, the whole debate would be a moot point.



Are Hair Relaxers Increasing Fibroid Risk in Black Women: A commentary on Black Women and Health

I have often said to anyone who would listen that: “If relaxers were doing to White women’s hair [and health] what they’re doing to Black

women’s, they would have been pulled off of the market years ago!” My most recent testimony to this suspicion was an article posted in the [October 2010 Issue of Au Naturel](#) on the hazards of the Brazilian Blow-out. This article elucidated recent discoveries about the dangers of this blow-out treatment which has become a favorite “relaxer-type” treatment among the ethnically diverse *curly girls* of Hollywood. I marveled at how quickly warnings, public health alerts and safety recalls were issued about this relatively new hair treatment regimen. I thought, “Since this treatment is primarily targeting Caucasian and Hispanic women, is that why this precautionary information has been so quick in reaching the consumer?” I don’t doubt that to be the case and here’s why: I’ve seen scalp burns, bald patches and allergic reactions all caused by relaxer systems (as stated by dermatologists and recounted to me by clients) with more frequency than I care to mention. Yet, I’ve never seen a public health alert or safety alert issued to date which has specifically discouraged the use of these products by anyone. So within the natural hair care field, we simply observe the ill effects as created by chemical companies and as administered by our sister practitioners (cosmetologists) and pray for enlightenment. I, for one,

Poetically Speaking: Poetry Def

By Arthur Earl Hawthorne Jr. (my brother)

This is a poem of poetry def
Vibrating bass and treble clef
No music but with melody
No pictures but the mind can see
Sustenance for soul’s good health

This is a poem of poetry fly
Shivers spine and speaks through eyes
Lilts and falls and lyrical
Natures spell so magical
Moves a stoic man to cry

This is a poem of poetry hot
It starts so cool, ‘til hitting that spot
Burning raging inferno then sky
Nova’s explode adding to nine
Energy felt around head’s top

This is a poem of poetry sweet
A chocolate song, sticky elite
Taste buds rev to a higher gear
The ears they see, eyes they hear
Verses you will long to repeat.

Please see *A Commentary on Health* on page 5

What Can I Do about Breakage?

The most effective strategy to understand and combat hair breakage is to identify the source of the problem. Once the source is positively identified, you can devise a workable solution that speaks to the nature of your unique concerns. Here are some questions to consider and recommended solutions to diagnose your own concerns and combat this vexing problem:

1) Is it truly breakage that you're experiencing or is it natural shedding? Take a few hairs that are in your comb or brush and line them up on a plain counter top. Carefully look at the hair strands. Hair strands that are consistent with your hair length are likely the effect of normal hair shedding (35–100 strands per day for the average person). [Note: Unnatural shedding is alopecia, which is not subject to the recommendations provided in this article. Seek medical advice for this condition to determine cause and solutions.] If the hairs are much shorter than your hair, take note. Now, carefully hold a strand between the thumb and index fingers of both hands and pull your hands apart. Does the hair strand stretch like a rubber band before breaking or does it break easily, showing signs of inelasticity? If the hairs are short, compared to those on your head, and are inelastic, you are definitely experiencing breakage.



Photo from www.thankgodimnatural.wordpress.com

2) Where is the breakage occurring—all over or in sections? If the breakage is not easily located, it may be universal. This occurs most often when clients are transitioning to natural hair or have experienced heat damage. Because of the varying textures, the hair may break near the root where the natural texture begins.

Please see *Breakage* on page 6

Hair Relaxer Use & Risk of Uterine Leiomyomata in AA Women

Reprint of the Abstract and Discussion from an Article by Lauren A. Wise, Julie R. Palmer, David Reich, Yvette C. Cosier and Lynn Rosenberg Published in the American Journal of Epidemiology on January 20, 2012

Abstract

“Hair relaxers are used by millions of black women, possibly exposing them to various chemicals through scalp lesions and burns. In the Black Women’s Health Study, the authors assessed hair relaxer use in relation to uterine leiomyomata incidence. In 1997, participants reported on hair relaxer use (age at first use, frequency, duration, number of burns, and type of formulation). From 1997 to 2009, 23,580 premenopausal women were followed for incident uterine leiomyomata. Multivariable Cox regression was used to estimate incidence rate ratios and 95% confidence intervals. During 199,991 person-years, 7,146 cases of uterine leiomyomata were reported as confirmed by ultrasound ($n = 4,630$) or surgery ($n = 2,516$).

The incidence rate ratio comparing ever with never use of relaxers was 1.17 (95% confidence interval (CI): 1.06, 1.30). Positive trends were observed for frequency of use ($P_{\text{trend}} < 0.001$), duration of use ($P_{\text{trend}} = 0.015$), and number of burns ($P_{\text{trend}} < 0.001$). Among long-term users (≥ 10 years), the incidence rate ratios for frequency of use categories 3–4, 5–6, and ≥ 7 versus 1–2 times/year were 1.04 (95% CI: 0.92, 1.19), 1.12 (95% CI: 0.99, 1.27), and 1.15 (95% CI: 1.01, 1.31), respectively ($P_{\text{trend}} = 0.002$). Risk was unrelated to age at first use or type of formulation. These findings raise the hypothesis that hair relaxer use increases uterine leiomyomata risk.”

Please see *Hair Relaxers and Risk* on page 4

Cancer Resources from page 1

Consistent with this theme of cancer cures, I would like to re-print a link to a new [cervical cancer resource directory](#) which provides information on free and low-cost cancer screening and vaccinations available throughout North Carolina. The HPV vaccine is one recent innovation in medicine that, like the polio vaccine, will make cervical cancer (as well as other others) a thing of the past. This preventive measure coupled with regular Pap-test screenings means that no one has to die from cervical cancer. It is perfectly preventable. My colleague's mother died on Feb. 23rd from this disease. He is one of the

[nation's leading researchers on cervical cancer prevention](#), and he was powerless to help his own mother. The ironies of life are really too much sometimes but I believe that this great challenge in his life will propel him to do even greater things than he has already done for cancer prevention at a rather young age. "Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to do and die."

Please visit the [resource directory](#) and share the link with ANYONE that you know who has not received a pap screening in the past 2 years. It's time, and it's necessary!

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Discussion

"In this large population of premenopausal US black women, we observed increased risks of uterine leiomyomata in association with ever use of hair relaxers, duration of use, frequency of use, and total number of burns experienced during use. A composite variable for frequency and duration of use showed evidence of a dose-response relation. Positive associations were also observed between frequency of hair relaxer use and risk of uterine leiomyomata among the long-term users (i.e., duration of use ≥ 10 years). We found no association of uterine leiomyomata with age at first use or type of formulation used. Although stronger associations were seen for leaner women and women living in the South, there was no evidence of statistical interaction by body mass index or region. The stronger results for surgically confirmed uterine leiomyomata cases may be explained by the higher rates of uterine leiomyomata-related hysterectomy in the South (50, 51), the region in which the prevalence of hair relaxer use was greatest. Adjustment for genetic admixture (i.e., percentage of European ancestry) among the subset of women with genotyping data showed appreciable attenuation of effect estimates, but genetic admixture did not fully explain the positive associations.

Systematic bias in the reporting of hair relaxer use by case status is unlikely because reports of hair relaxer use were ascertained prior to the diagnosis of uterine leiomyomata. Any random misclassification of hair relaxer use would have diluted associations for the

extreme categories of exposure. Although we assessed history of hair relaxer use at a single point in time only (i.e., in 1997), results were similar across the different time periods of study observation. Retention of the baseline cohort was approximately 80% through 2009, thereby minimizing potential for bias due to differential loss to follow-up. Our validation study of uterine leiomyomata indicated high accuracy in reporting, and we controlled for a wide range of potential confounders. Moreover, stronger results were observed in subgroups of women among whom misclassification of uterine leiomyomata is lower (e.g., younger women and women with a recent pelvic ultrasound examination) (4). The large sample size and high incidence of uterine leiomyomata in this population conferred excellent statistical power to detect small increases in risk.

Because lye relaxers are thought to contain harsher chemicals (e.g., sodium hydroxide) than no-lye formulations, we hypothesized that women who more often used lye relaxers would have a higher risk of scalp lesions or burns, thereby increasing dermal absorption of putative endocrine-disrupting chemicals. One potential explanation for the lack of difference in association between lye and no-lye formulations is that both products pose a similar likelihood of scalp lesions and burns. Scalp inflammation and scarring alopecia have been documented anecdotally with both lye and no-lye relaxers (16). In addition, although most women currently reported using no-lye formulations, most had probably used lye formulations in the past (16), which could have diluted the association.

A Commentary on Health from page 2

have wondered if some people have grounds for a class-action law-suit. But, don't get me started! I'm really not interested in chasing down THAT rabbit hole. That would have to be someone else's thing. Besides, thousands of women successfully use relaxer treatments with no observed ill effect to hair, health or otherwise. Shouldn't they be free to choose for themselves? I say yes, as long as we all have balanced information, like a Surgeon General's warning on cigarettes, the contraindication information tacked onto prescription drug commercials, or the thousand-word a minute provisory statements at the end of auto-car dealership radio ads. (Can anyone really talk that fast?)

All the same, recent information that has come to my attention, as published in the American Journal of Epidemiology brings this matter again to the fore. Because I have access to many scientific journals and publications through my daytime job, I have taken the liberty to reprint the abstract and discussion from this article in this newsletter issue. I'm providing the details because there's nothing worse than finding a good article, getting started with reading and then discovering that you need to subscribe to the journal to see the "meat" of the study results! (Very frustrating!) So, I'm presenting a lot of the details here for those

Hair Relaxers and Risk from page 4

The study had no information on the individual brands of chemical relaxers used or on constituents that might be considered estrogen disruptors. Thus, we are unable to provide insight as to the specific mechanisms by which hair relaxers could have influenced risk. It is possible that hair relaxer use is a proxy for exposure to other products containing high levels of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (17) and that the hair relaxers themselves are not the causal agents. For instance, it has been documented that US black women have higher mean levels of exposure to environmental chemicals such as phthalates (52), bisphenol A (53), and common insecticides (54) than other ethnic groups. Finally, we observed that the percentage of

who may be interested.) To clarify, let me state that leiomyomata is more commonly known as fibroids.

When I first heard a sister make a link to fibroids and the general health and well-being of the "Black Woman collective" by advocating social (and herbal) solutions, it was a sister affectionately called the "[Herb Lady](#)." I met this sister during the Natural Hair Care Expo Exodus Tour 2011, as organized by Sister Malaika Cooper. Her lectures were all about freeing the womb of [fibroid malignancy](#). I sat in her lecture in Cleveland and was honestly impressed by her message and her delivery. So, I was not surprised to learn about a *possible* increased risk of fibroids in Black women as a result of relaxer use. Please review the [full article here](#).

In all, this matter is one which demands further research and consideration. But for clarification: this article is NOT stating that relaxers **cause** fibroids in Black women. It states that there is an "association." Causality is a statistical measure that is much more rigorously ascertained than the constructs of this research study provide and would require controlling for numerous confounding variables which are as diverse and as numerous as culture itself. But, association does warrant delving deeper. Stay tuned!

European ancestry decreased with increasing use of hair relaxers in a subset of women from our cohort, and that adjustment for genetic admixture attenuated the observed associations for hair relaxer use and uterine leiomyomata incidence. Therefore, although our study raises the hypothesis that hair relaxer use is associated with an increased risk of uterine leiomyomata, we cannot rule out the possibility that greater African ancestry, thought to increase genetic predisposition to uterine leiomyomata (55), explains part or all of the observed association. Future studies are needed to confirm whether hair relaxer use and uterine leiomyomata are indeed associated."

"although our study raises the hypothesis that hair relaxer use is associated with an increased risk of uterine leiomyomata, we cannot rule out the possibility that greater African ancestry, thought to increase genetic predisposition to uterine leiomyomata, explains part or all of the observed association."

Schatzi's
5224 Knightsbridge Way,
Raleigh, NC 27609

Phone:
(919) 844-1933
(919) 844-2867

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Breakage from page 3

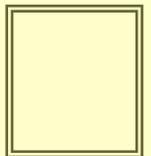
If the breakage is in the back or around the edges of the hair, ask yourself the following questions:

- a) Am I wearing head bands, braids or extensions that are too tight?
- b) Do I comb, tease or manipulate the damaged area of my hair more than others?

If the breakage is in the crown of your head, do you more frequently work with your hair when you are in a rush? (Not intuitive right?) Well, what I've discovered is that when some women are shampooing and styling their own hair, they are more likely to experience difficulty at the crown of the head because of the need to elevate the arms for an extended period of time. Because many women don't have great upper body strength, they get frustrated, drop the arms and RAKE the hair rather than to caress it. The result is damage that may not be easily seen until it is rather extensive.

Once you have determined the general nature and source of your problem, change your hair care regimen to counter the ill effects of current practice. *General rules of thumb are:* Keep your hair conditioned and moisturized. Comb the hair when it is moistened and wear protective styles. Sleep on satin rather than cotton and monitor your results. If none of these measures work, seek professional assistance from a licensed natural stylist. Good luck!

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258 W. Millbrook Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27609



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