Unmanageable hair

Alice,

I seem to have very untamable hair. I keep the hair on the side of my head really short because of this. It's not that my hair isn't uncombable or anything like that, but if the hair on my sides grow even the slightest they start sticking out at 45-90 degree angles to my head, and there is nothing I can do about (I've tried everything but STIFF STUFF....). I look at other people's hair and they don't even need to blow dry or comb it and it sticks firmly to the sides of their heads. Is there a reason why some people have such easy control over their hair? Is it something I'm eating or doing wrong? Thank you for any advice!

-For Me, Every day is a bad hair day

Answer

Dear For Me, Every day is a bad hair day,

Isn't it ironic that no matter how dead hair may be, it seems to have a life of its own? There are a variety of possible explanations for why your hair may be giving you grief, but knowing what may be contributing to "untamable hair" may be the "mane" step in getting it under control. Possible explanations for "untamable hair" include an out-of-whack haircut, nutritional deficiencies, and disorders such as hypothyroidism and hair disorders. Depending on what may be causing your hair to defy your wishes that it stay in its place, various options for getting your hair under control are available.

Figuring out what may be contributing to your untamable hair may take some detective work. It may be helpful to discuss this with a health care provider and a stylist. After all, hair problems of all sorts may be caused by a variety of factors, ranging from the medical to the cosmetic. One or more nutritional deficiencies (e.g., iron deficiency) may affect the thickness and texture of the hair. Hypothyroidism, too, may lead to dry and brittle hair that may become unmanageable. Hair shaft disorders, which are usually inherited, may be indicated by split ends, dry and brittle hair, and skin abnormalities. Damaging hair by over processing (e.g., coloring, heating, perming) may lead to hair shaft disorders. Unless a health care provider suggests otherwise, you may want to consider the following for healthier hair:

- Make sure that you're not eating any foods to which you may be allergic
- Get vital nutrients (e.g., iron, vitamins A, C, and E, the B-vitamins, and omega-3 fatty acids) by eating foods such as dark leafy greens, beans, nuts, whole grains, eggs, and poultry
• Use healthy oils in cooking
• Avoid trans fats that are typically present in store-bought baked and other items, i.e.,
  cookies, cakes, fries, donuts, margarine
• Go easy on the red meat
• Keep hydrated with six to eight glasses of water a day
• Eliminate stress with a relaxing activity that you enjoy, such as meditation, yoga, or
  Pilates
• Have fun with exercise five days a week, at least 30 minutes a day

List adapted from Hair Disorders [2] from the University of Maryland Medical Center

You asked why some people have such easy control over their hair. This is a difficult question
to answer, because hair types and styles are determined by a number of factors including
genetics, environment, hair products that are/are not used, as well as haircuts. If you think
that lifestyle factors may be contributing to your hair problems, you may want to ask yourself a
few questions. Is your haircut contributing to the way that your hair stands? Does your hair
behave a bit more when longer (beyond the stage you mentioned)? Does your hair act
differently in certain types of weather or in times when you're more stressed than usual? Have
there been any changes in your diet or sleep patterns? Have you considered changing the
type of hair products that you use? How would you feel about speaking with your hair stylist
about your concerns?

No matter how tempting it may be, avoid trying miracle remedies that promise to transform
your hair into the most beautiful mane in the world. If you are considering medical and/or
homeopathic treatments, a health care provider can best help you choose a plan of action that
is right for you and your hair. For tips on nutrition and exercise, you may want to check out the

Finally, here's one last option that hasn't yet been mentioned: rock your unique hairstyle, no
matter what you think it looks like. After all, there's nothing more memorable than someone
with a 'do that, well?stands out from the crowd.

Alice!
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Hair [5]

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Prenatal vitamins [11]

Resources

Medical Services (Morningside) [12]
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