



Spotlight On Health

Your Hair!

When you think or talk about your hair, you are usually talking about the hair on your head. Except for your lips, the palms of your hands and the soles of your feet, you have hair on almost every part of your body!

Some of it is easy to see, like your eyebrows and hair on your head, arms and legs. But other hair like that on your cheeks, is almost invisible. Depending on where it is, the hair has different jobs it does. The hair on your head keeps your head warm and provides some cushioning for your skull. The eyelashes protect your eyes by decreasing the amount of light and dust that go into them. Eyebrows protect your eyes from sweat dripping down from your forehead.

You have more than 100,000 hairs on your head! About 50 to 100 hairs fall out each day when you're washing your hair, brushing it, combing it or just sitting still. New hairs are constantly replacing those that have fallen out!

Each hair on your head grows for about 2 to 6 years. Then it rests a few months and then, falls out! It is replaced by a new hair which begins to grow from the same hair follicle. This is the cycle of hair growth that helps to maintain just the right numbers of hairs on your head!

How does hair grow? It doesn't matter if it's growing out of your head, arms, or legs, it all rises out of the skin the same way. It starts at the hair root which is a place beneath the skin where cells band together. They form keratin (the protein that hair is made of). The root is inside a follicle which is like a small tube in the skin.

As the hair begins to grow, it pushes up from the root and out of the follicle through the skin. Tiny blood vessels at the base of the follicle feed the hair root to keep it growing. Once the hair is at the skin's surface, the cells within the strand of hair aren't alive anymore. The hair you see on every part of your body contains dead cells. That's why it doesn't cause pain when someone cuts your hair with scissors!

Nearly every hair follicle is attached to a sebaceous gland which is sometimes called an oil gland. These sebaceous glands produce oil which makes the hair shiny and a bit waterproof. Sometimes they can produce too much oil - so it's time to shampoo!!

What kind of hair do you have?



Black, red, auburn, blond? Curly, straight, wavy? Hair color comes from Melanin which is the substance that gives your hair and skin its pigment. The lighter someone's hair, the less melanin there is. Older people lose the melanin pigment in their hair as they age, making their hair look gray or white.

Quite often, a person's skin color goes with the color of their hair. For example, many blonds have light skin, where many people with darker skin have dark brown or black hair. Usually a kid's hair color is determined by one or both parents' hair color because you inherit genes from your parents. When it comes to type of hair, your hair follicles make the difference. Some are structured in a way that produces curly hair. They also determine if your hair will be thick or thin, coarse or fine.

You must take good care of your hair and make sure you keep it clean! Some wash their hair every day - some only a few times a week. It depends on your hair...

When washing your hair, use a gentle shampoo and warm water. Lather up using your fingertips. You may use a conditioner or a shampoo with conditioner in it. This will take the tangles out of your hair and make it comb out easier plus make it look smooth. Rinse your hair with plenty of clean water. Dry it gently with a towel. Make sure you get it completely dry before going out this winter!

An extra tip is to be gentle when you brush or comb your hair. Don't yank on it. Also don't wear your ponytails or braids too tight as it can irritate your scalp. If you use a blow dryer, ask for an adult to help so you don't burn yourself!

