



## HAIR CARE ON A BUDGET

*Dermatologist offers money-saving tips to keep hair looking good in a bad economy*

**NEW YORK (Nov. 10, 2009)** – These days, saving a little money here and there is all the rage. Even small changes – carpooling to work or making coffee at home – can really add up. But when it comes to cutting back on [hair care](#), many people might be hesitant to make significant changes for fear that it could impact their looks and the health of their hair. That’s where a dermatologist can help.

Speaking today at the American Academy of Dermatology’s [skin](#) academy (Academy), [dermatologist](#) Paradi Mirmirani, MD, FAAD, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California, San Francisco, discussed how to have healthy, beautiful hair without breaking the bank.

“There are many ways that we can trim our hair care expenses, from going to the salon less frequently to using fewer products,” said Dr. Mirmirani. “But, the ultimate goal with any type of change in our hair care routine should be to maintain healthy hair.”

To understand what it means to have healthy hair, Dr. Mirmirani pointed out that hair is a fiber; its structure and integrity must be maintained in order for the hair to stay healthy. The root of the hair, also known as the hair follicle, produces the hair fiber which is made up of hair keratins (fine, fiber-like structures packed very tightly together and wrapped on the outside with a very hard outer cuticle). The cuticle of the hair functions much like the shingles on a roof, by protecting the underlying structure. When the outer cuticle is damaged, then the cuticle breaks apart and the inner fibers are exposed – resulting in frizzy, flyaway or lackluster hair.

Since healthy hair requires an intact cuticle, Dr. Mirmirani advised that any hair care routine or products used to clean or style the hair should be gentle enough to maintain the structure of the hair fiber and cuticle. With this in mind, she offered several tips on how consumers could make small changes to save money on hair care without compromising hair health.

- more -

## **Brush Up on Hair Brushes**

While boar bristle brushes often are touted as the best hair brushes, Dr. Mirmirani said that this is actually a myth. “Boar bristle brushes, which are quite expensive, put a lot of friction on the hair because the bristles come into contact with hair against its natural grain,” explained Dr. Mirmirani. “This can cause a considerable amount of damage, and consumers can save money and keep hair healthier at the same time by buying inexpensive plastic brushes with wide-spaced needles, which are widely available.”

## **Shampoo – Less is More**

Although shampooing the hair is an important part of any hair care routine, Dr. Mirmirani pointed out that most people could save money on shampoos in several ways. By definition, shampoo is a detergent used to remove dirt from the scalp with different scents added to make them more appealing. However, Dr. Mirmirani explained that people could use less shampoo (particularly if they have long hair) by only washing the scalp and not shampooing the lower parts of the hair.

“When we wash our hair, we tend to use too much shampoo by washing the entire length of the hair rather than concentrating on cleaning just the scalp,” said Dr. Mirmirani. “In addition, how often you wash your hair should be based on how oily your scalp is – if it’s oily, you might need to wash it more frequently than someone with a dry scalp. However, most of us are probably over-washing our hair and can save some money by using less shampoo.”

Dr. Mirmirani noted that [African Americans](#) should wash their hair no more than once a week, because their hair and scalp tend to be much dryer than lighter-skinned individuals. Over-shampooing can further dry out the hair and scalp of African Americans.

While most shampoo formulas are very similar, people might mistakenly believe that salon formulas (which are considerably more expensive) are better than drugstore brands. Dr. Mirmirani explained that manufacturers of brand name shampoos sold in stores spend quite a bit of time and money on research and development of their formulas, and she finds them just as good as pricier shampoos sold at salons.

“I recommend that you choose a shampoo formulated specifically for your type of hair,” said Dr. Mirmirani. “If you color your hair, then select a shampoo designed for color-treated hair, as it is gentler than regular shampoo and can help extend your hair color. But if dandruff is a problem, then try a shampoo formulated to fight dandruff. The key is finding the product that works best for you and avoid the temptation to spend more than you have to.”

### **Conditioners Count**

To maintain healthy hair, Dr. Mirmirani advised not to skimp on conditioner. For those with long hair, conditioner plays an important role in helping protect and maintain the structure of the cuticle, especially at the ends. If hair is damaged, it is even more important to make sure the hair is conditioned regularly.

“If your hair is damaged, I would advise using a 2-in-1 shampoo with conditioner followed by extra conditioner to fully protect and help restore the cuticle,” said Dr. Mirmirani. “A leave-in conditioner for deep conditioning that can be applied at home also is important for people with long or damaged hair, and these products do not need to be expensive or applied at a salon to work well.”

She also cautioned that conditioners can make fine hair look even limper, so they should only be used on the tips of the hair and not the scalp or length of the cuticle.

### **Heat, Color and Chemicals Can Be Costly**

In her practice, Dr. Mirmirani sees many people who try to save money by using ceramic flat irons on a very high heat setting to straighten their hair at home rather than spending money for this hairstyle at a salon. However, many problems can occur with these styling products, and it is important to read the instructions before using them on hair. For example, flat irons should never be used on wet hair, the highest heat setting or on an everyday basis. When using any heat-based styling product (including a flat iron, blow dryer or curling iron), Dr. Mirmirani recommended using a styling product specially designed to protect the hair from heat before styling the hair, such as a leave-in conditioning spray.

For those who color their hair, Dr. Mirmirani said hair dyes applied at the salon are basically the same as those that people can purchase from a store and use at home. She suggested that store-bought hair color be tested by applying a small amount on the skin behind the ear and monitoring the area for 24 hours to make sure a person doesn't have a reaction to it.

“By dyeing their own hair, people can save a considerable amount of money on their hair care routine – especially if they can enlist the help of a friend for quick touch-ups,” said Dr. Mirmirani.

Since ultraviolet (UV) radiation will bleach hair, Dr. Mirmirani also recommended avoiding intentional or prolonged [sun exposure](#), and wearing a hat to protect color-treated hair.

Perms, which chemically alter the hair fibers, should be used with caution when applied at home. For example, Dr. Mirmirani explained that if you leave the chemical in your hair too long, it can permanently damage the hair.

“I can’t stress enough the importance of reading the instructions before applying a perm at home,” said Dr. Mirmirani. “I would recommend leaving the solution on for a shorter duration than the instructions recommend to see how it works the first time you apply it and not to use the product more frequently than once every eight weeks.”

### **Fuller Hair For Less**

While full, luxurious hair may not be in the genes for most people, Dr. Mirmirani said there are a few simple tricks that can make limp hair look fuller that won’t cost any money. For instance, blow drying hair upside down can add volume and hiding the central part of the hair by restyling it can create the illusion of fuller hair.

Many shampoos are available that claim to add volume to hair, and Dr. Mirmirani said that some of these shampoos can be helpful for people with limp hair. However, she doesn’t recommend any products that claim to regrow hair, as the only product that has been shown to do this is minoxidil – a topical solution approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat [hair loss](#) in women and men.

“Even though minoxidil is available over-the-counter, people who are considering using it for thinning hair should see their dermatologist for a full evaluation before starting this therapy,” said Dr. Mirmirani. “Infomercial and Internet products that claim to improve hair growth for people with fine or thinning hair may not have been scientifically tested, and I strongly advise people not to spend their money on these types of products. They are expensive and they often don’t work.”

If you have multiple hair care concerns and are unsure what products will work best for your hair type, Dr. Mirmirani recommends that you see a dermatologist for expert advice.

Headquartered in Schaumburg, Ill., the American Academy of Dermatology (Academy), founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 16,000 physicians worldwide, the Academy is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the

skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more information, contact the Academy at 1-888-462-DERM (3376) or [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org).

# # #

**Jennifer Allyn**  
**(847) 240-1730**  
**jallyn@aad.org**

**Kara McFarland**  
**(847) 240-1701**  
**kmcfarland@aad.org**

**Allison Sit**  
**(847) 240-1746**  
**asit@aad.org**