

# New Trends in Hair Cosmetics for 2008

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**W**hy would anyone care about having a bad hair day? It doesn't influence our ability to think, speak, or be a productive member of society. Yet, having a bad hair day can lead to low self-esteem, decreased self-confidence, and poor social performance. The bottom line is that hair is very important because it is one of the few physical features that can be easily modified to achieve a current trend or to reflect our perceived image of beauty. Dark skin is extremely challenging to lighten; however, dark hair can be lightened in less than an hour. It is difficult for a tall person to appear short; however, long hair can be shortened in less than 5 minutes. If the current trend changes from large oval eyes to small almond eyes, it would be almost impossible to achieve this change; however, brown hair can be changed to red within 30 minutes. Hair is one of the few body structures that can be controlled. This is why hair cosmetics and hair adornments are very popular. They allow for easy experimentation and immediate gratification to those in search of something new, different, unusual, attractive, or strange. This article examines new trends in hair cosmetics, including foiling, bonding, and tattooing. These hair and scalp modification techniques have been selected because they present problems that may contribute to dermatologic issues.

## Foiling

Hair dyeing can be an expensive endeavor. The average haircut and permanent coloring procedure costs approximately \$80 nationally, with specialty salons in major cities charging as much as \$500. Hair dye must be reapplied every 6 to 8 weeks depending on the fastidiousness of the consumer and the rate of hair growth. As the new hair grows in, the junction between the natural hair color proximally and the dyed hair distally (the root) becomes increasingly obvious. Foiling is a

technique that was developed to decrease the unattractiveness of roots.

Foiling involves the use of 3 to 6 different colors that are systematically applied to various sections of hair on the scalp. Typically, dissimilar colors are selected within a color group. For example, reddish blonde, red, and reddish brown dyes can be used to cover gray and complement an individual's underlying brown hair color. Sections of hair 1 to 2 in wide are selected for individual application for each of the different dyes.

The permanent hair dye is applied to the selected sections of hair and subsequently wrapped in aluminum-foil sheets. The foil is folded into individual pouches that are left in place for 30 to 40 minutes until the hair dye has processed. The foil keeps the dye from touching the surrounding hair and preferentially dyes only the intended locks. If large sections of hair are dyed different colors, it creates a dramatic effect. However, if small sections of hair are dyed different colors, the variation creates an aesthetically pleasing appearance by diminishing the flat or lackluster appearance of chemically dyed hair. It is the variation in hair-shaft color that provides luster and shine, which can be mimicked with foiling.

Foiling also minimizes the harsh line between the natural hair color and the monotone dye. The intended hair color variation is only enhanced as the new hair grows in, allowing 8 to 12 weeks between dyeing procedures, which saves time and money and cuts down on damage to the hair follicle. Foiling may also create a more natural hair color variation in mature men and women. For example, it is normal for the hair of the sideburns and temple to turn gray before the hair on top of the scalp. In order to minimize the amount of gray hair while preserving some of the natural gray color, hair-coloring artists selectively dye the hair on the top of the head and use minimal or no dye application at the temples. Sometimes blonde highlights are added around the face to create the sun-kissed effect that naturally results from UV-induced hair bleaching.

Hair foiling has become a form of art, such that many salons specialize in this technique only and do not cut or style hair. Many younger individuals use hair foiling to

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create dramatic hair contrasts. For example, the top of the head may be dyed blonde and the hair at the nape of the neck dyed black. A more mainstream foil combination places a lighter color on the top of the head with the same color 2 shades darker on the hair below the ears.

From a dermatologic perspective, hair foiling can create some interesting hair-loss conundrums. The typical presentation is a middle-aged female who states that her hair is falling out preferentially on the top of her head. On physical examination, the hair on the nape of the neck, which is a darker color, is more abundant than the blonde hair on the top of her head. The patient states that her hair is naturally brown and that her mother experienced hair thinning at approximately the same age and currently wears a wig. Without further thought, the easiest and most likely diagnosis appears to be androgenetic alopecia. The patient is advised to use minoxidil 2% twice daily and to return for follow-up after a 6-month trial.

The patient returns in 6 months and states that her hair loss has increased. Was the minoxidil ineffective or was the diagnosis wrong? In this case, the diagnosis was wrong. Prior to her initial diagnosis, the patient had applied large volumes of peroxide to the naturally dark hair on the top of her head. This degree of hair lightening requires 2 chemical procedures, bleaching and dyeing, that can occur simultaneously in some of the professional hair dyes on the market. These 2 procedures significantly weaken the hair shaft by removing structural proteins. The addition of the propylene glycol-based minoxidil vehicle further damaged the already weakened hair shafts, precipitating additional hair loss through breakage. The hair on the sides of the scalp had been dyed but not bleached, since the patient remained close to her original color in these areas. Thus, the hair on top of the scalp was lost through breakage whereas the hair on the sides of the scalp remained, creating an unusual pattern of preferential hair breakage.

These novel methods of combination hair dyeing can create unusual patterns of hair loss. The astute dermatologist should examine variation in hair color closely when assessing individuals who complain of hair loss. The solution may be to discontinue the dramatic lightening of the hair on the top of the head, where hair loss preferentially occurs.

### **Bonding**

Another method of creating variation in hair color is through the attachment of synthetic hair of various colors to the natural hair shafts. This technique, known as bonding, requires a hot-glue gun in order to fuse individual synthetic hair fibers to the base of existing scalp

hair. Because of the weight of the additions, only a few fibers can be attached at a time. This technique is used in both men and women to thicken the hair on the scalp and the eyelashes. The scalp-hair bonds are intended to remain in place for 8 weeks; however, individuals with excessive sebum production may notice early loosening and loss of the bonded hair.

The most popular use of hair bonding is to create long, lush eyelashes, sometimes referred to as Oriental eyelashes. Typically, 2 to 3 synthetic eyelashes are bonded to one native eyelash. The bonded eyelashes are usually slightly longer, more tightly curled, and darker than the natural eyelashes. They are popular among mature women with graying and thinning eyelashes. The longer, curlier eyelashes can also be used to allow the eyelash hairs to show under redundant upper eyelid skin that covers the natural shorter eyelashes.

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The problem with the bonded eyelash and scalp hairs is breakage. The weight of the synthetic hairs combined with the rigid glue makes the natural hairs prone to breakage at the attachment point. This causes shedding of the hair prosthesis and may prevent reapplication if the native hair is too short. Similar hair breakage can occur on the scalp. Traction alopecia is another consideration.

### **Tattooing**

An increasingly popular method of camouflaging thinning scalp and eyebrow hair in women is tattooing. Broad lines of brown to brownish-black pigment are applied to the scalp or drawn amongst the eyebrow hairs. This permanent method of scalp-skin coloring may be appealing to women in their 40s and 50s, but it is not a good solution to camouflage lost scalp hair. The tattoo pigment is quite unsightly in women with white hair in their 70s and 80s. It is impossible to remove the pigment without damaging the remaining hair follicles.

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Tattooing is also a poor camouflage technique for lost or graying eyebrows, since the shape of the eyebrow changes with advancing age. As subcutaneous fat is lost from the forehead, the eyebrows descend onto and below the superior orbital ridge. If the eyebrows have been tattooed, the resulting folded skin creates an unnatural appearance. It is key to remember that a tattoo must be considered permanent and should create a cosmetically acceptable appearance for the entire life of the patient. Too often patients do not anticipate or

recognize the inevitable facial changes associated with aging and are dismayed at cosmetic corrections made 20 years previously.

### Summary

Foiling, bonding, and tattooing are 3 cosmetic hair procedures that are gaining popularity. Each of them poses interesting dermatologic issues. This article has highlighted the cosmetic technique, anticipated results, and complications associated with these procedures. ■