

MetroMN Chapter of ONS

April 2021

The results are in, and more! *Recent & Upcoming MetroMN Activities*

Thank you to those who completed the survey regarding program preferences for this next year! The Program Committee, chaired by Jen McClure, is underway organizing a robust plan for the year based on your responses.

The majority of respondents also expressed interest in learning more about improving their oncology nursing practice for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) people. In an effort to immediately take a small step to address that need, we are inviting nurses to author articles for publication here that support nurses' practice or their learning about diversity, equity and inclusion. Page two of this newsletter is our first article. Nurses who identify as BIPOC are particularly encouraged to submit articles.

We had a wonderful Zoom turn out for our April program, and hope to see YOU Tuesday, May 11 for "Cultivating Gratitude" either in person or Zoom. Please post the attached flier in your work areas and like/share the Facebook event broadly! Registration is required. [Home - MetroMinnesota \(ons.org\)](#)

April 15 we hosted an oncology nursing career panel via Zoom for students at Inver Hills Technical College. If you have interest in participating in similar panels down the road let us know; it's a great way for us to grow interest in our specialty!

Are you in an oncology leadership role, such as Manager or Educator? MetroMN is curious if you'd be interested in a round table discussion with other local oncology nurse leaders to network/share what needs you have that perhaps MetroMN can help fill? metromnons@gmail.com if this resonates.

Like, follow and share our posts @metromnons

Supporting you!

MetroMN wants to financially support your career growth! We are awarding \$500.00 to an undergraduate nursing student and \$500.00 to a graduate nursing student.

You are encouraged to apply with a brief statement of why you are committed to oncology nursing, metromnons@gmail.com.

At our Tuesday, May 11 event we will randomly selecting two nurse attendees (virtual or in person) to receive \$100.00 sponsorship for use on any ONS educational content!

Watch our Wednesday Facebook posts @metromnons for upcoming opportunities to win a treat for your work area as we recognize Oncology Nursing month in May!

African American Haircare

By Precious Acquaye, BSN, RN

I have the privilege of working with patients from all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds as a RN on the Surgical oncology unit at the university of Minnesota Medical Center. This purpose of this article is to shed light on the intricacies of taking care of African American hair. One of the key means of which Africans American express themselves is through their hair. This can be traced back to African heritage. It is therefore important to be familiar with the unique needs of African American hair.

African American hair in its natural state is different than Caucasian hair in that it is curly and it grows up and rather than growing down. African American hair is versatile with many choosing different styling options. Natural afro textured hair is fragile and therefore prone to breakage. Many choose to wear weaves, wigs, cornrows, dreadlocks, extensions and braids to retain length and moisture, while protecting their natural hair from breakage which can be caused by exposure to the elements. Additionally, because of these characteristics of afro-textured hair the effect of chemotherapy can especially devastating in regards to hair loss.

A key characteristic of natural afro textured hair is shrinkage when the hair gets wet. As the hair dries and loses moisture, each strand contracts. Shrinkage is a normal part of healthy afro textured hair. Some African Americans choose to “relax” or “perm” their hair which is using a chemical treatment to straighten the hair. When hair is chemically straightened it does not shrink when it gets wet. Considering what was mentioned above here are some tips to aid with the care of afro-textured hair.

One of the challenges faced by nursing staff is having to deal with afro textured hair especially if they have no previous exposure to that hair. The following tips below should help nurses and supporting staff cater the unique needs of African American patients and improve their holistic care.

Hair care tips

1. Wash hair every 1-2 weeks- The more often hair is washed the more moisture is stripped out of the hair, which can result in dry, brittle hair.
2. Apply natural oil to the scalp and ends of the hair every day. This helps retain moisture. Oils such as coconut oil, Argan oil, and Black castor oil helps. Try to avoid products with petroleum in them since they can dry out hair and stop moisture from penetrating the shaft.
3. Sleep with a satin bonnet or satin pillow- This prevents frizz, breakage and dryness. Satin pillows are also great for skin as well. Cotton pillowcases tend to snag hair and create tears and breaks.
4. Use wide tooth combs, or afro pics and finger detangle to get rid of knots. Make sure hair is slightly damp before detangling this helps minimize breakage.
5. When hair is wet and shrinkage occurs use a blow driver with a built in comb to brush hair from root to end
6. Have shower caps available as some individuals want to keep their hair dry in order to prevent shrinkage.

On my unit we have taken the above tips into consideration in a practical way by having products (such as afro-textured shampoos, conditioners and satin caps) available on the unit for our patients. The ultimate goal of taking care of oncology patients is to provide holistic care and part of the goal is understanding the unique hair considerations of African American patients.

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