

SCALP DRYNESS & SHAMPOO

There are a few conditions which we see in dermatology which create dryness and “dandrufflike” scaling throughout the scalp. Many patients are under the mistaken belief that shampooing makes the scaling worse, but the opposite is actually true.

The scaling in these conditions is caused by overlyrapid production of skin cells. Essentially, the skin cells are being created faster than they can be shed. Shampooing helps to gently remove these “builtup” skin cells. Sometimes there is also a yeast which can trigger inflammation and additional scaling. Frequent shampooing helps to decrease the presence of this yeast, whereas infrequent shampooing actually fosters its growth.

So what does this mean?

Unfortunately, those who only shampoo only once per week will find it difficult (if not impossible) to see improvement.

Shampooing the scalp just once or twice per week simply doesn’t provide enough opportunity for the adherent scale to be loosened and washed away. Plus, many of the prescription products used to treat the scalp are delivered in a medicated shampoo, and must be used at least 3x/week in order to work. So not only will infrequent shampooing make the scalp inflammation and scaling worse, but it can also prevent the needed medications from being applied with sufficient frequency.

Apart from frequency, the duration of application is important as well. Because the medication in prescription shampoos is suspended within the lather, it should remain in contact with the scalp for at least 2-3 minutes before being rinsed away. An easy approach would be to wet the hair and apply shampoo at the beginning of the shower. The medicated lather can remain on the scalp for the duration of the shower and then rinsed off at the end.