

173
Hot hair
styles



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Are extensions

making you bald?



JENNIFER ANISTON
The star says extensions ruined her locks

Hair extensions are the crowning glory of thousands of women – but could they be ruining your hair forever?

They provide instant length, volume and colour, and celebs like Kim Kardashian, Tyra Banks and Katie Price love them.

Hair extensions are the current beauty trend of choice and, inspired by their idols, British women spend £65million a year on them.

But are they bad for your hair?

As our shocking pictures show, extensions have been blamed for the bald patches sported by Britney Spears and Victoria Beckham.

Former Friends star Jennifer Aniston admits she 'ruined' her locks with extensions – and Katie Price had to fork out £45,000 to fix an £11,000 extensions job that went horribly wrong.

Hair loss

Steve O'Brien, a hair and scalp expert from the London Centre Of Trichology, says he has seen a major increase in people seeking help for baldness caused by extensions in the last two years.

'We used to get about 30 people in a month, but now it's more like 50,' he says.

Extensions – made either from human or synthetic hair – can be braided in, glued in, woven in, or clipped in.

But this causes permanent damage to the hair or root that the extension is attached to.

Traction alopecia – where extensions put so much tension on hair follicles in the scalp that they rip out, causing small bald patches – is something we're seeing a lot these days,' says Steve.



Victoria Beckham shows off her patchy scalp



Jessica Wright has visible bald patches



Britney's damage was severe

Hidden dangers

Barry Stevens, a hair scientist from The Trichological Society, believes extensions which are glued in, sewn in or attached with a metal ring – said to be favoured by Victoria Beckham – should be banned in the UK.

And glue is especially dangerous.

In February, there were fears that 34-year-old Atasha Graham, who collapsed after going clubbing, had died as a result of an allergic reaction to the latex adhesive that was used in her hair extensions.

'Chemicals used in extensions can be very dangerous if they come into contact with the skin,' says Barry. 'Salons often use latex glue and there are many people in the UK allergic to latex.'

'I've seen cases of anaphylactic shock as a result of hair extensions – they also pull hair from the skin, sometimes making the scalp bleed.'

Correct technique

Beautiful hair extensions are perfectly possible, however, if you buy good quality hair and have

your scalp,' says Paul Faltrick, an ambassador for Great Lengths.

While techniques and type of hair used may differ (Glenn Kinsey uses fibre hair in his extensions and Paul Faltrick human hair), both agree on the dangers of using glue, wax, rings and weaving.

'Dissolving glue during removal of hair extensions is typically done using a corrosive product and a pair of pliers to tease stuck-on hair away from your own,' says Glenn. 'It's a bit like removing chewing gum – and the potential for damage is enormous, as you can imagine.'

Meanwhile, Paul says all the major issues with hair extensions stem from poorly-educated stylists.

'People think it's easy to apply them, but there's so much involved in the application process, it's not that simple.'

One thing's for sure, it's important to do your homework.

'Try to go to a salon that just does hair extensions,' says Glenn. 'A lot of hairdressers do the odd head here and there and often lack the experience needed for safe application and removal.'

Paul adds: 'My top tip would be to ask to see the stylist's certificate, ask which brand they use and research more about the hair, application and maintenance before you book an appointment.'

Look out for the cost, too. Hair extensions can set you back anything between £300 and £1,500 – but don't try to do it on the cheap, warns Glenn.

If the price is too good to be true, chances are it'll also be bad for your hair,' he says. 'Once the damage is done, it's hard to correct.'

Caring for your hair extensions

- * Use a special brush made just for extensions (available from your salon). Take a small section and gently brush from the attachment to the end.
- * Use cool water and a gentle shampoo and light conditioner to minimise tangles.
- * Always dry hair thoroughly, starting at the bond and working out to the ends. Use a blotting, rather than a scrubbing motion with your towel.
- * Always blow dry on a cool/warm temperature.
- * Sleep with your hair in a loose ponytail to avoid knots.
- * Never leave extensions in for more than three months before removal or replacement, otherwise extensions will grow too far down and there's a risk your own hair will mat at the root.



KATIE PRICE
She had to spend £45k to fix a bad extension job

My own hair fell out!

Martha Wall, 29, a sales manager from Taunton, in Somerset, is getting married in May – but says her hair and confidence were 'wrecked' by hair extensions she had done in a local salon. 'When they removed the extensions, they used acetone to soften the glue. My own hair broke and fell out,' she says. 'Thankfully, Mark Glenn technicians applied new extensions with their fingers, no chemicals or glue, and they looked and felt amazing. I'm so happy my hair is sorted for the big day!'



BEFORE



AFTER

Words: Ellie White. Photos: Bigpicturephoto.com, Xposure, Barcroft Media, Rex Features, MarkGlen.com