



Case Type

Chemical Hair Straighteners



General Background

A 2022 study by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) found that women who use chemical hair relaxers may have a higher risk of developing uterine cancer. The study included data from over 33,000 women who were asked to self-report their use of hair products, including straighteners and relaxers. Women who used hair straightening products were almost twice as likely to develop uterine cancer than those who did not. The link was even stronger with frequent use (more than 4 times a year). Studies have also found an association between hair products and ovarian cancer. Hair relaxers and leave-in conditioners, contain endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), such as formaldehyde, that are linked to many cancers and other health problems.

Since 2022, dozens of lawsuits have been filed against big beauty companies including L'Oréal, Revlon, and more. Lawsuits claim the manufacturers knew about the harmful consequences of the chemicals used in their straighteners. In addition to these harmful chemicals, there are several unknown chemicals that manufacturers have been hiding in these products, such as dyes and fragrances. The fact that manufacturers are not disclosing these ingredients is suspicious and puts consumers at risk.

Who's At Risk

Although there is no difference in the link between hair relaxer use and cancer risk according to race, the effects are more significant for Black women since they are much more likely to use these products.

This high prevalence of use can be attributed to aggressive marketing targeted at Black and Brown women, including young girls. Big beauty corporations use images that reinforce the Eurocentric beauty standard of shiny, straight hair to entice women and girls to use their products. As a result, many women of color start using these harmful products regularly at a young age. Hendler Flores Law is committed to holding these companies accountable for pushing harmful products on young Black and Hispanic girls and women despite knowing the risks.