

# **CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE HAIR CARE**

**NYAH MILLER**  
**THE OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY & EXPERIENCE**

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE

Participation in this training opportunity is not required. While your participation is encouraged and a valuable part of development in caring for patients of all demographics, we want to emphasize that participation is voluntary and will have no impact on your job status, performance review, compensation or employment.



# INTRODUCTION



## **Nyah Miller (she/her)**

Marshfield Clinic Region of Sanford Health

Health Equity and Experience Advisor & Certified Birth Doula



# OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to explain how hair care is framed as patient quality, safety, and experience.
- Participants will understand how culture impacts hair care and how the different practices may affect patient care.
- Participants will be able to identify and locate resources to assist Care Delivery in practicing culturally responsive hair care.



# HAIR HISTORY

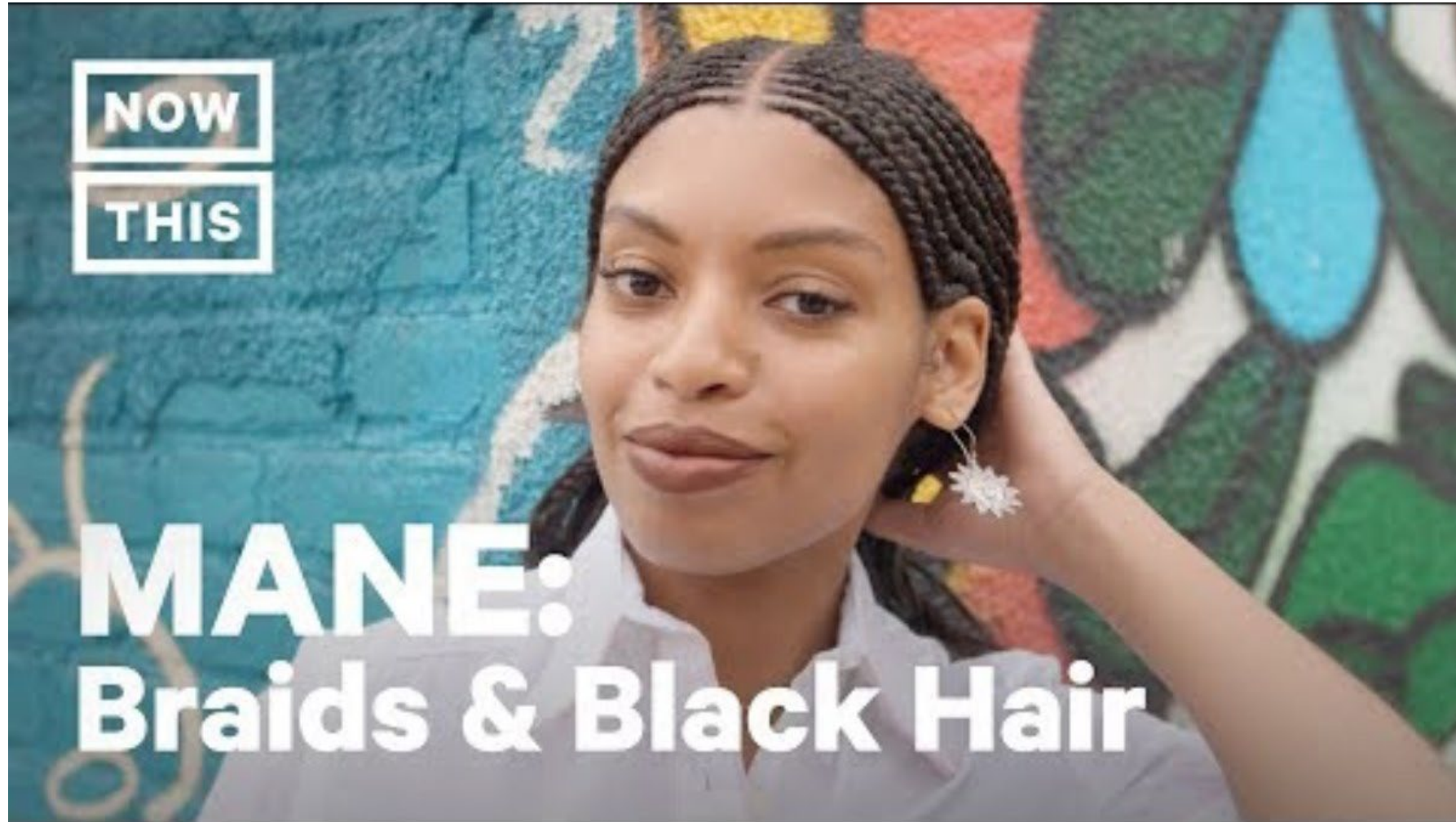


- Hair expression is a powerful way for members of the Black community to honor the story of the Black experience across the world.
  - Shows their resilience, resistance, pride, joy, and courage by preserving, evolving, and reclaiming historical hairstyles. Throughout history, hair traditions aimed to create a sense of beauty signified by marital status, age, religion, wealth, and rank. The act of styling hair is an intimate social activity where bonds were built, and knowledge was shared.
  - In many Indigenous cultures, hair could be considered a physical manifestation of a person's thoughts and an extension of themselves. Cutting hair symbolizes cutting off the flow of thought and may only occur when individuals are experiencing a major change in their lives such as the loss of a loved one.
- In Islamic teachings, Allah asks that women wear a hijab to practice modesty and redirect the focus of both women and men from the materialistic world towards a more spiritual one. By wearing a hijab, women can construct their own identity and decide how others will interpret it. When interacting with a male provider, women are not allowed to be alone or remove their hijab, to maintain their dignity and modesty.
- In Orthodox Jewish culture, women cover their hair following marriage, upholding tradition and embracing their new status as a wife and then, mother. Women may use hats, wigs, or scarfs to cover their hair when leaving their home. A woman's head covering is essential to her dignity and modesty. In everyday life not all Orthodox women will cover their hair but when attending service, they will do so.





# NOWTHIS IMPACT: THE HISTORY OF BRAIDS & BANS ON BLACK HAIR

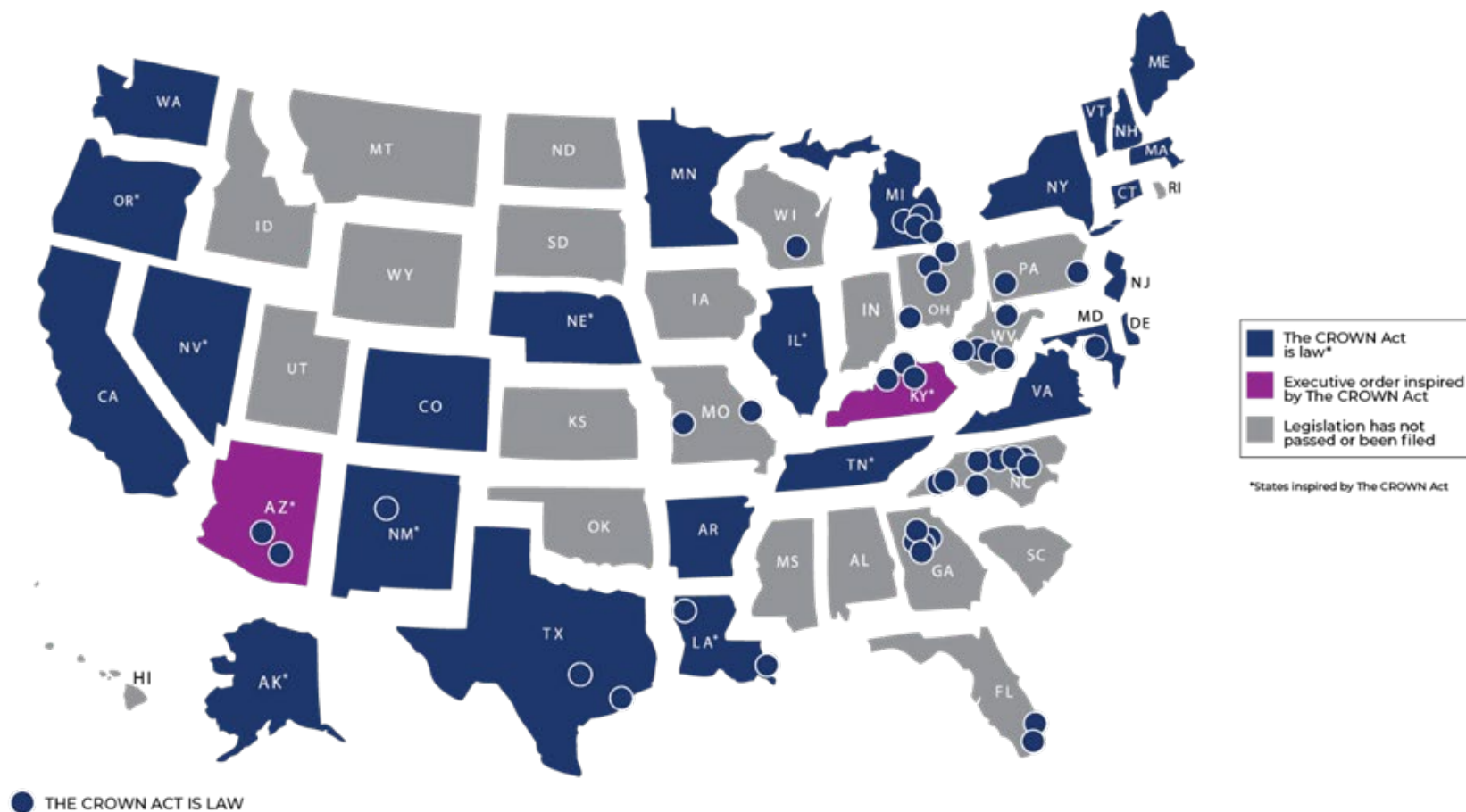


[https://youtu.be/e\\_lOrEJq1\\_s?si=IVwZz0NXEST6gH4T](https://youtu.be/e_lOrEJq1_s?si=IVwZz0NXEST6gH4T)



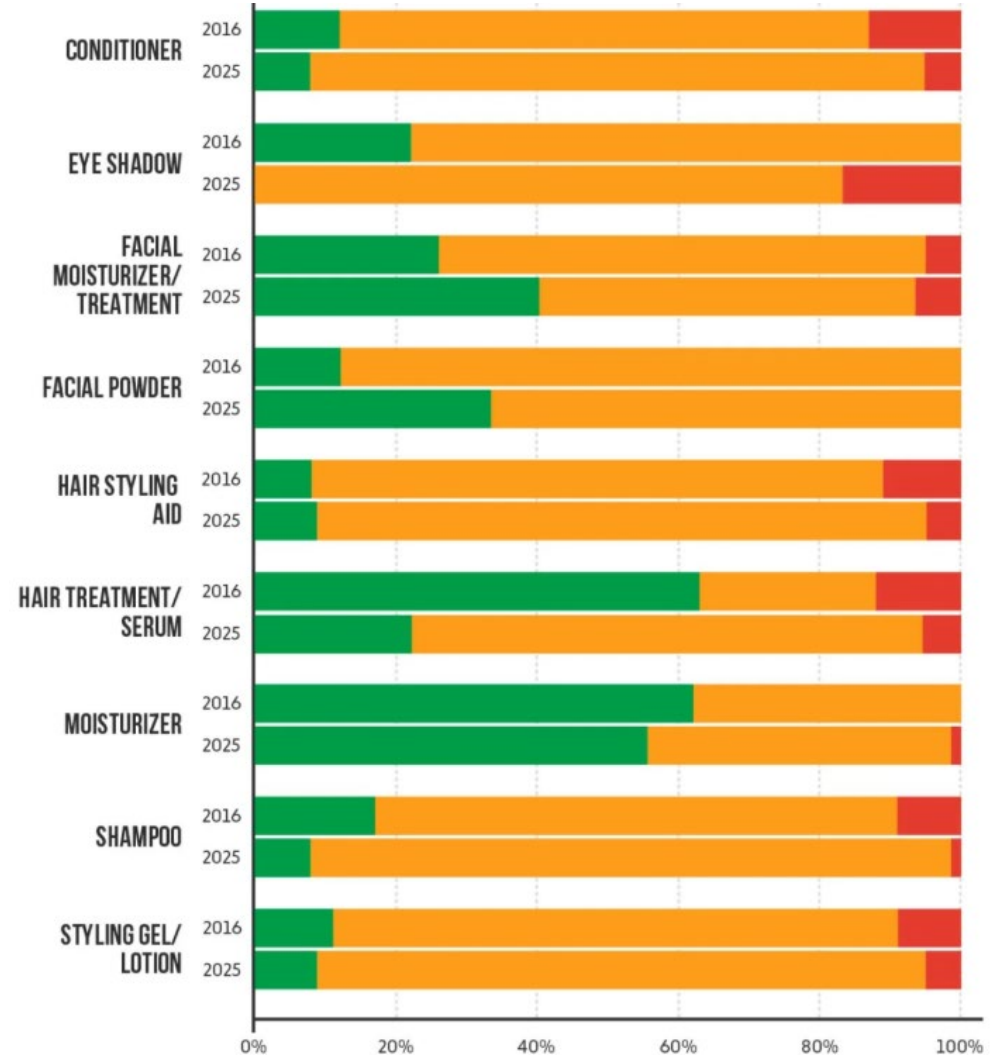
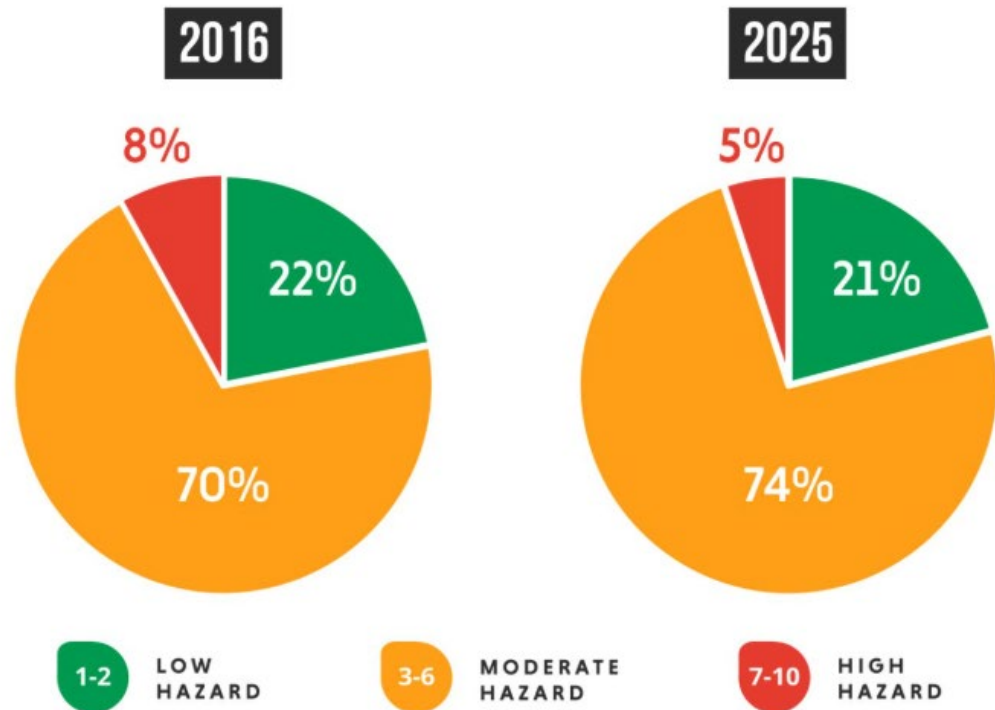
# PATIENT QUALITY, SAFETY, AND EXPERIENCE

**Creating a  
Respectful and  
Open World  
for Natural Hair  
(CROWN) Act, 2019**



# HARM MITIGATION

Figure 2: Skin Deep hazard scores for products marketed to Black women in the 2016 and 2025 reports





# ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP'S SKIN DEEP DATABASE

HAZARD SCORE RANGE



EWG  
VERIFIED™

4

Data  
Availability:  
Fair

## Palmer's Coconut Oil Formula Moisture Boost Shampoo

INGREDIENT CONCERNS

LABEL INFORMATION

CERTIFICATIONS

### Ingredient concerns

See how this product scores for common concerns.

|        |                                         |
|--------|-----------------------------------------|
| ● LOW  | Cancer                                  |
| ● HIGH | Allergies & Immunotoxicity              |
| ● LOW  | Developmental and Reproductive Toxicity |
| ● HIGH | Use Restrictions                        |

8 FRAGRANCE

Data Availability: Fair

FUNCTION(S)

deodorant, masking, perfuming

CONCERNS

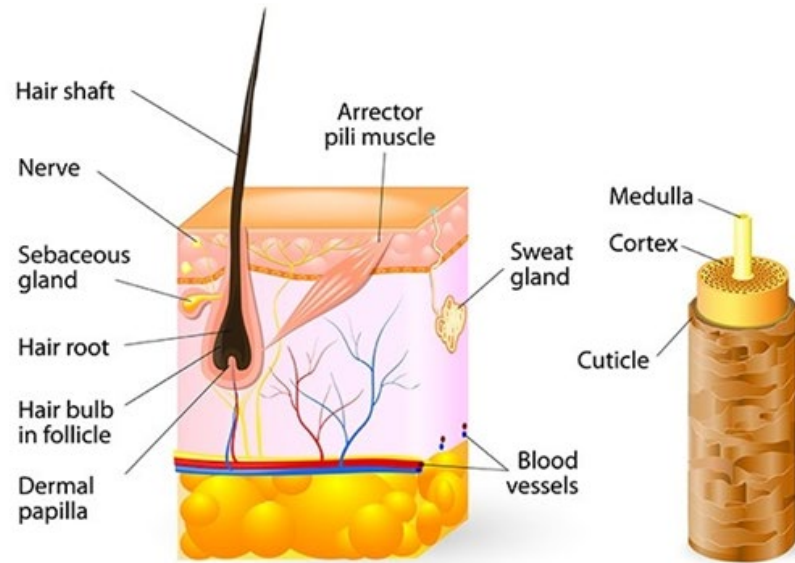
- Allergies/immunotoxicity (high)
- Endocrine disruption (moderate)
- Non-reproductive organ system toxicity (moderate)
- Ecotoxicology (low)
- Irritation (skin, eyes, or lungs) (moderate)

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS INGREDIENT](#)



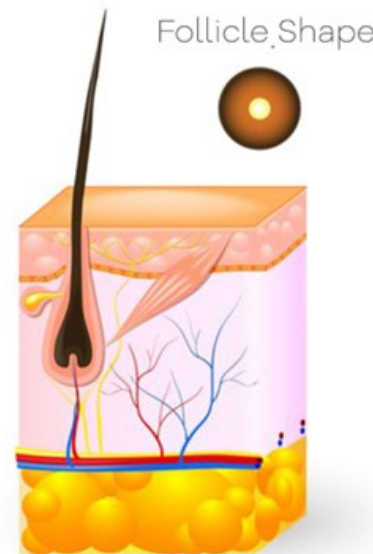
# HAIR ANATOMY

## HAIR ANATOMY

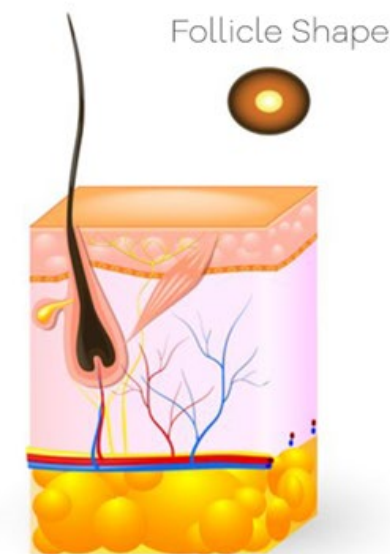


## HAIR SHAPE

### STRAIGHT HAIR



### WAVY HAIR



### CURLY HAIR



Genes are ultimately what determine the pattern of your hair and curly hair is a dominant trait. If one or both parents have curls, you will be born with either wavy or curly hair too. The hair follicles will determine just how curly your hair will grow out of your head. An oval shaped follicle will produce curly hair while more round follicles create straight hair. A flat oval shaped follicle will result in kinky, coily curls.

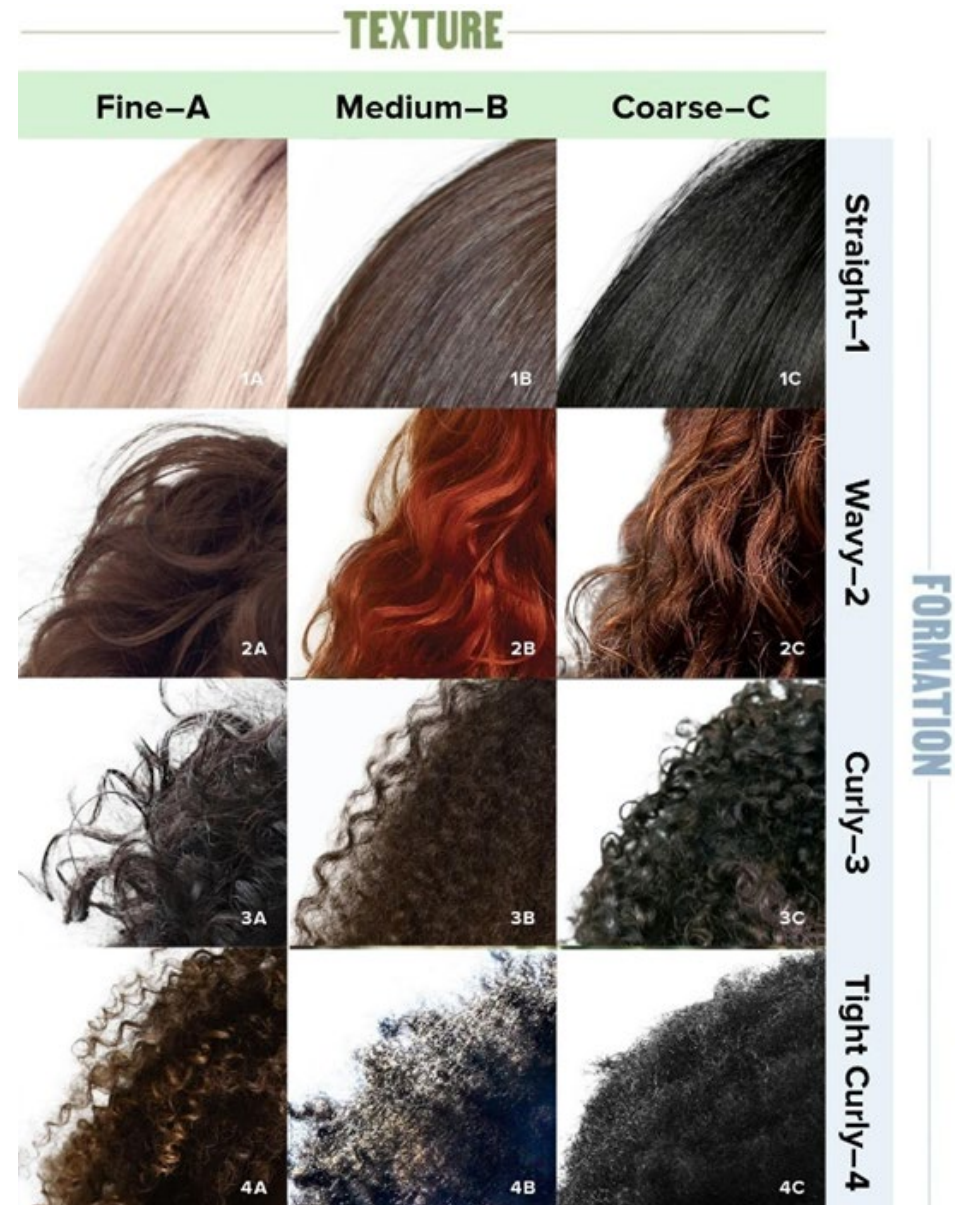
The **hair bulb** is a pear-shaped structure located at the base of the hair follicle. Those with straight hair have little to no hook on the bulb, but for individuals with curly hair the hair bulb is slightly hooked.

Curly hair is most susceptible to environmental damage and tangles from having a weaker cuticle



# CURL PATTERNS

- **Curl Pattern = Texture (A-C) + Formation (1-4)**
- The **tighter** and more **texture** the curl pattern has in its **natural state**, it will more often require additional **manipulation, care, time, and moisture**.





# CARING FOR CURLY & TEXTURED HAIR

- Emphasis on detangling and moisture prior to manipulation or styling
  - Mat prevention and care
  - Moisture does not always mean wet
- Sometimes we must be creative
- Not all styles are suitable for all hair types and curl patterns



# THE LANGUAGE OF HAIR



- **Uplifting Hair Descriptors**
  - Celebrate all styles on all people – including textures and styles
  - use objective terms – tangled, voluminous, etc.
- **Importance of Consent**
  - Spiritual significance
  - Cutting the hair is comparable to an amputation
  - Gain consent to touch from patient and support people if the patient is a minor
  - Discuss alternatives





# TWIN CITIES PBS: NATIVE AMERICAN HAIR AND ITS CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL IMPORTANCE



[https://youtu.be/6kiHekeu\\_GA?si=77nU9CFEIEtk5CHw](https://youtu.be/6kiHekeu_GA?si=77nU9CFEIEtk5CHw)



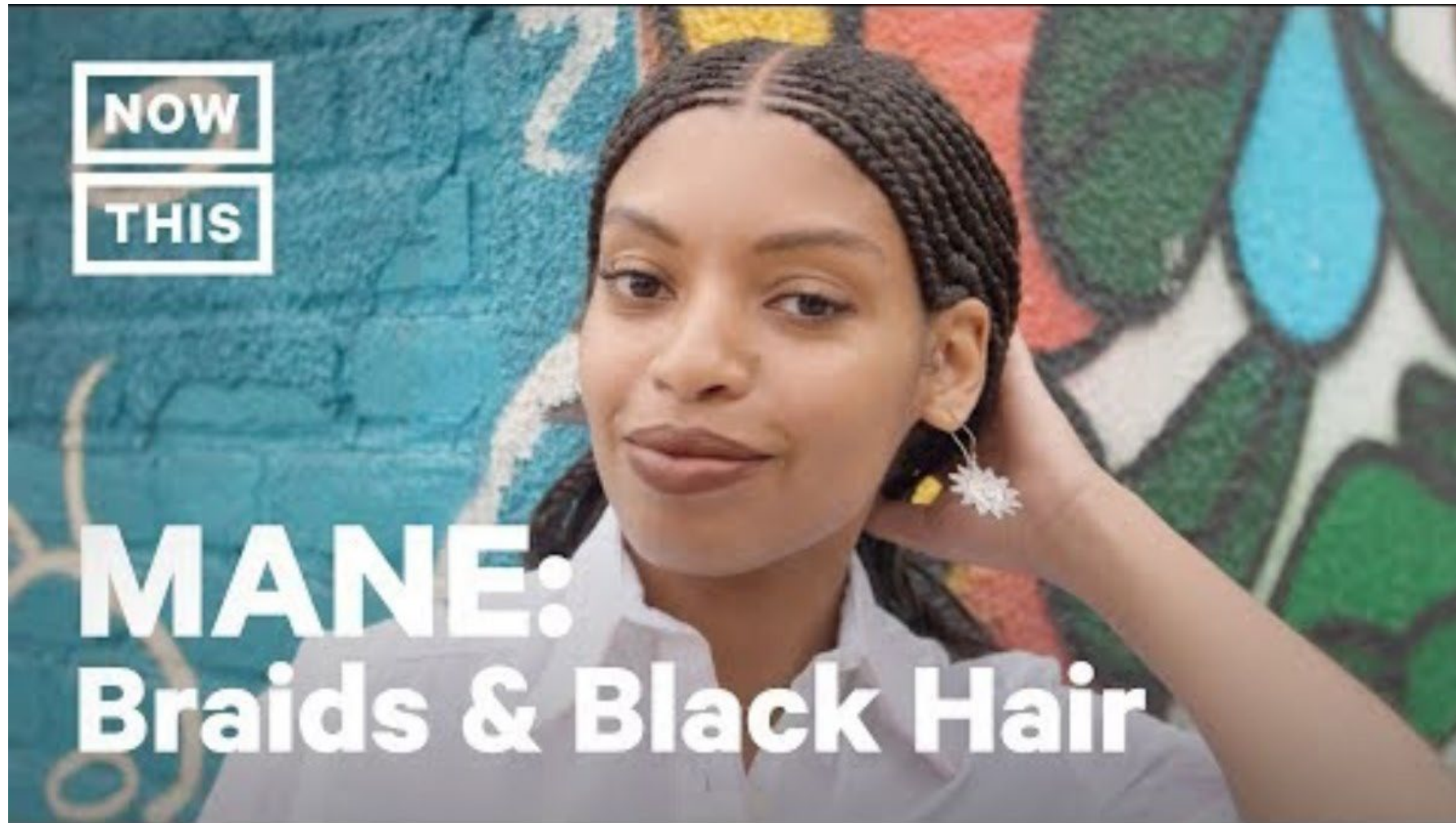
# ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Protective Hairstyles
- Procedures and Hospital Equipment
  - Braids and Twists can be helpful for certain procedures that require access to the scalp such as an EEG or surgery
  - If the scalp is inaccessible due to a protective style, try to schedule procedures when the patient is transitioning styles
  - Remember these styles are costly
- Unresponsive, Incapacitated, or Deceased Patients
  - If the patient cannot make decisions for themselves about their care or is deceased, first discuss with family members or their support people to figure out what hair care looks like for them at home. For Indigenous patients, contact the Native American Advocate before proceeding with any hair care.
- Hair Wraps and Head Coverings
  - Utilize appropriate name for the covering
  - Gender considerations
  - Offer alternatives such as a private space or clean linens or bonnet
  - Keep the covering safe
- Facial Hair
  - Refrain from shaving unless requested, opt for trimming instead





# NOWTHIS IMPACT: THE HISTORY OF BRAIDS & BANS ON BLACK HAIR



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_l0rEJq1\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_l0rEJq1_s)



# RESOURCES AT SANFORD HEALTH

- Culturally Responsive Hygiene Kits
- Culturally Responsive Hygiene Kit Employee Guide
- Culturally Responsive Hair Care Toolkit
- Additional Resource:
  - <https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>





# KITS ACROSS THE NATION



<https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/wellness/story/doctor-inspired-make-inclusive-hair-kits-patients-curly-97253737>



# CALL TO ACTION

- Champion your continued learning and awareness of cultural nuances
- Encourage availability of the Culturally Responsive Hygiene Kits
- If unsure, lean on your available resources
- Remember that consent is key
- Be creative, empathetic, and neutral





**THANK YOU!**