

Woman sues L'Oreal over claim hair straightener spurred uterine cancer

October 25 2022, by Cara Murez



A Missouri woman has sued L'Oréal and several other beauty product

companies, alleging that their hair-straightening products caused her [uterine cancer](#).

The [lawsuit](#) claims that Jenny Mitchell's cancer "was directly and proximately caused by her regular and prolonged exposure to phthalates and other endocrine-disrupting chemicals found in defendants' hair care products."

Mitchell, now 32, was diagnosed with cancer on Aug. 10, 2018, and had a hysterectomy the following month.

"At that time, at the age of 28, my dreams of becoming a mother were gone," Mitchell told *CNN*.

Mitchell first used [chemical](#) relaxers in third grade. She used the products from about 2000 to March 2022.

"As most young African-American girls, chemical relaxers, chemical straighteners were introduced to us at a young age," Mitchell said.

"Society has made it a norm to look a certain way, in order to feel a certain way. And I am the first voice of many voices to come that will stand, stand up to these companies, and say, 'No more.'"

The [lawsuit](#) comes on the heels of a [study](#) published last week in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* that found the risk of developing [uterine cancer](#) in women who use chemical hair-straightening products was 4% by age 70, compared to 1.6% in those who hadn't used any of the products in the previous 12 months.

The products are much more common among Black women than [white women](#), with the former comprising 7.4% of the study participants but 59.9% of those ever using straighteners.

"Black women have long been the victims of dangerous products specifically marketed to them," civil rights attorney Ben Crump, one of Mitchell's attorneys, said in a [news release](#). "Black hair has been and always will be beautiful, but Black women have been told they have to use these products to meet society's standards. We will likely discover that Ms. Mitchell's tragic case is one of countless cases in which companies aggressively misled [black women](#) to increase their profits."

In addition to Crump, Mitchell is represented by Diandra Debrosse Zimmermann and others. She is seeking more than \$75,000 in damages.

Debrosse Zimmermann said the lawsuit is a "watershed moment" for women of color, *CNN* reported. L'Oréal, Namaste Laboratories LLC, Dabur International Ltd. and Godrej Consumer Products, parent company of the Just For Me brand, did not respond to requests for comment, *CNN* said.

Similar lawsuits have been filed against cosmetic companies in California and New York, *CNN* reported.

"We imagine that we will continue representing additional women in filing cases, as will other firms, and more and more women will come forward," Debrosse Zimmermann said.

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more on [uterine cancer](#).

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