

# Natural Hair & Scalp Care

*Using herbs, essential oils, and nutrients to create healthy and beautiful hair*



Hair and scalp problems might not be life-threatening illnesses, but they do affect self-confidence and self-esteem and may also be external clues to internal health problems. In addition to problems like dandruff and itchy scalp being a constant annoyance, hair and scalp problems can indicate nutritional deficiencies, hormonal imbalances, and problems with circulation.

Fortunately, there are many foods, herbs, and nutrients that can help you maintain or regain a healthy hair and scalp. Applied topically or taken internally these remedies can help you have healthier and more beautiful hair. In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, we'll address these natural remedies for hair and scalp, discussing the various herbs, essential oils, and other natural methods you can use to resolve various hair and scalp problems.

## Basic Hair and Scalp Care

Like every other part of the body, healthy hair requires good nutrition. So, the first thing to consider if you're having problems with your hair and scalp isn't what you put on your hair, but rather what you are putting into your body. Firstly, if your hair feels rough and tends to split, make sure you're getting enough protein in your diet. If you aren't, consider taking a collagen supplement. Collagen is a protein that helps promote the health of both hair and skin.

Second, you may also be lacking in minerals. Minerals like zinc and copper are responsible for hair color, so if you're greying prematurely, you may be lacking certain minerals. Try taking a *Colloidal Mineral Supplement* or mineral rich herbs like alfalfa, horsetail, kelp, dulse, or nettles.

One mineral that's particularly helpful for hair is silica. If you have frizzy hair, split ends, or your hair lacks body you may be deficient in silica. Other signs of silica deficiency include brittle fingernails that split or crack easily and thin, dull skin. *Watkin's Hair, Skin, and Nails Formula* has helped many people with these problems. It contains two silica-rich herbs, horsetail and seaweed (kelp or dulse), along with rosemary and sage.

Another thing to consider is your digestion. As we age, we tend to develop low stomach acid and enzyme deficiencies. This makes it more difficult to digest and absorb proteins and minerals. If digestion is a problem consider taking a betaine hydrochloric acid (HCl) supplement or a *Digestive Enzyme Formula* containing HCl, pancreatin, bile salts, and enzymes.

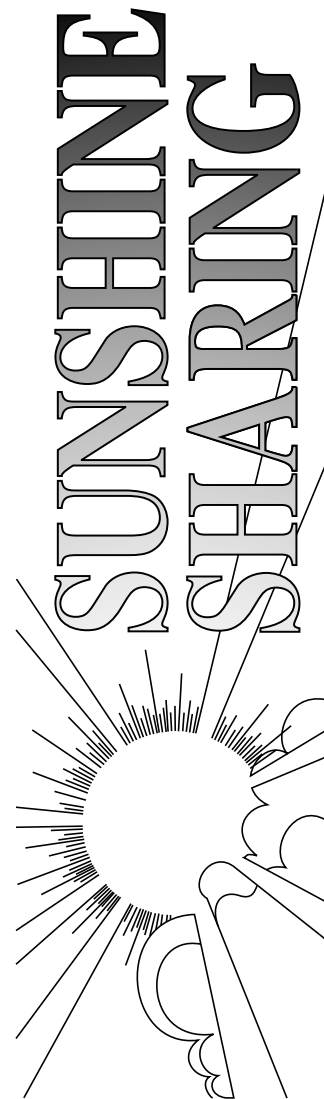
A healthy thyroid is also necessary for the health of hair and scalp. For example, low thyroid is one factor that may cause hair loss. If your body temperature tends to be low, you should consider getting tested for low thyroid. If you do have a thyroid problem, a *Hypothyroid Formula*, containing seaweeds like kelp or dulse, or a *Thyroid Glandular Formula* may be helpful.

Stress also affects hair health. If you're under a lot of stress and experiencing problems with your hair or scalp consider taking an *Anti-Stress B-Complex Supplement* containing B-vitamins and vitamin C. These nutrients help with stress and are also important for hair growth.

Both the scalp and the follicles in it that grow hair require good blood flow, so problems with circulation can also cause problems with the hair. Essential oils like rosemary, sage, eucalyptus, and tea tree promote blood flow to the scalp. Adding these circulatory enhancing oils to your shampoo will promote healthy hair as well as fight infections in the scalp.

Finally, it is important to choose healthy hair care products like shampoos and conditioners that don't contain irritating chemicals such as parabens and formaldehyde. Avoid these harsh chemicals in favor of more natural ingredients. You can also choose products based on whether your hair tends to be dry, normal, or oily.

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Your guide to better health the natural way

Vol. 35 No. 10

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## Natural Remedies for Hair and Scalp



There are three general methods you can use with herbs and essential oils to improve the health of your hair and scalp.

First, essential oils or herbal extracts can be added to your shampoo and used as normal. Second, infusions of herbs can

be used as hair rinses. This is done by making a tea from the herb or mixing an herbal extract into some water and applying it to the scalp after washing the hair. Do not rinse the herbs out of the scalp after applying. Just dry the hair as normal.

Third, herbs and essential oils can also be used to make hair masks. To make a hair mask start with a base of aloe vera gel, coconut oil, olive oil, or other similar ingredient. Then add the essential oils or herbal extracts to this base and mix them together thoroughly to create the mask. Apply the mixture to the scalp, cover your head with a shower cap, and allow the mask to sit in the hair for at least 20-30 minutes before washing the hair.

Here are some valuable remedies that you can use in shampoos, rinses, and masks to improve the health of your hair and scalp.

**Aloe Vera:** The gel from the aloe plant can be applied to cool and soothe a dry, red, or irritated scalp. It is also a good base to use when making a mask using herbal tinctures as it mixes well with alcohol or glycerin extracts.

**Apple Cider Vinegar:** The natural pH of the scalp is slightly acidic and shampoos and soaps tend to be alkaline (in order to emulsify and remove oil). Apple cider vinegar can be used to help make the scalp pH more acidic. Mix together half a cup of vinegar with half a cup of water and rub it into your scalp. Leave the mixture on for 10 minutes before washing your hair. If it causes any discomfort to the scalp, wash it out right away.

**Castor Oil:** Applied to the scalp, castor oil can moisten dry hair, relieve scalp irritation, and fight fungal infections of the scalp. It also stimulates circulation. To make a castor oil mask, mix two teaspoons of castor oil with two tablespoons of coconut oil or aloe vera gel and apply to the scalp. Allow to sit for about one hour before washing your hair.

**Chamomile:** A tea or decoction of chamomile has been used as a hair rinse to relieve redness and itching of the scalp. It also helps to lighten hair color.

**Coconut:** The oil or milk from coconuts is a good base for hair masks. Coconut oil is good for applying essential oils, while herbal extracts can be mixed with coconut milk. Coconut is a great base for moisturizing dry hair and soothing an irritated scalp.

**Collagen:** The protein collagen is used to build cartilage, tendons, heart muscle tissue, skin, and hair. It's an important supplement to consider for hair problems that are accompanied by aging, wrinkled skin and loss of structural strength in muscles and joints.

**Honey:** A small amount of raw, natural honey can be helpful in hair masks. Honey can nourish the scalp, promote hair growth, condition the hair to make it more manageable, and make hair more shiny. It also helps to lighten the hair.

**Horsetail:** Rich in silica and other trace minerals, horsetail has been used to thicken hair and make it stronger and less prone to split ends and fraying. It can be taken internally and used externally in masks and rinses.

**Nettle:** A highly nutritious plant, nettle is loaded with protein, minerals, and vitamins that help promote healthy hair. It can be taken internally or made into a strong infusion to use as a hair rinse. It promotes healthy hair growth and may help prevent hair loss.

**Rosemary:** Both the herb and the essential oil are valuable remedies for the hair and scalp. Rosemary stimulates blood flow to the scalp. It has been helpful for oily hair, dry hair, dandruff, and infections of the scalp when used topically. Simply add rosemary essential oil to shampoo or hair masks. You can also use the tea as a hair rinse. It is also helpful when taken internally.

**Sage:** The essential oil of sage helps to clean out sebaceous glands in the scalp making it helpful for itchy scalp, oily hair, dandruff, and hair loss. Add it to shampoo or use it in a mask. Taken internally, sage leaves help promote healthy hair and skin. It may also help with frizzy hair. A mask made from an extract of rosemary and sage in olive oil may also be helpful for darkening gray hair.

**Sandalwood:** The essential oil of sandalwood has anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties and can be applied topically as a part of mask for irritated scalp, dandruff, itchy scalp, and hair loss.

**Tea Tree Oil:** Add tea tree essential oil to shampoos or masks to fight infections in the scalp. It can also help with dandruff, redness, and itching.

## Basic Hair Care Remedies

Depending on whether your hair tends to be oily, dry or frizzy there are different remedies and methods you can try to improve the health of your hair and scalp.



### Oily Hair

Your skin and scalp contain sebaceous glands that secrete a natural lubricant called sebum. Sebum moisturizes the scalp and hair and protects it from dirt and damage from UV light. Sometimes the sebaceous glands secrete too much sebum. When this happens the hair gets coated with a thick, oily film that makes it feel greasy and sticky.

When the hair and scalp are oily, it is important to avoid over-stimulating the sebaceous glands. Washing the hair too frequently, using hot water when washing the hair, and blow drying the hair can all cause the sebaceous glands to secrete more sebum. If your hair is oily, it's better to wash the hair only two or three times a week, use lukewarm or cool water, and allow your hair to air dry.

Adding essential oils like rosemary, tea tree, eucalyptus, grapefruit, lavender, and sandalwood to your shampoo may help to reduce sebum production. You can also make a tea or decoction of astringent herbs like calendula or white oak bark along with rosemary or sage and use it as a hair rinse. These herbs help to tone up the sebaceous gland pores.

## Dry Hair

The sebaceous glands may also produce insufficient sebum to keep the hair properly protected, which can result in dry hair and scalp. Here are some remedies that may be helpful if your hair and scalp tend to be dry.

First, make sure you are getting adequate amounts of omega-3 essential fatty acids and fat soluble vitamins like A, D, and E. Also make sure your thyroid is functioning properly. Low thyroid can cause dry skin, scalp, and hair.

Essential oils you can use as a hair mask for dry hair include sandalwood, chamomile, mandarin, ylang-ylang, and rosemary. Mix these with a fixed oil like olive oil or coconut oil and leave the mask on for thirty to sixty minutes before washing your hair.

## Frizzy, Unmanageable Hair

Frizzy hair is typically the result of doing things that damage the hair, which can include chemicals in hair care products, use of styling irons, or damage from UV rays. Changes in hair protein or moisture level can also lead to hair that is difficult to manage. Split ends and difficult to manage hair may also arise from deficiencies of protein and minerals like silica.

For healthier, easier to manage hair, start by using natural hair care products to minimize chemical irritation. Make sure you are getting enough protein and minerals. Try taking *Watkin's Hair, Skin and Nails Formula*. It can help prevent split ends and make hair more silky and manageable.

Protect your head by wearing a hat on hot sunny days and wear hair protection when swimming in chlorinated water. Trim split ends to prevent further breakage.

Try a hair mask made with a coconut milk base. Add one spoonful of olive oil and a spoonful of honey (for lighter hair) or blackstrap molasses (for darker hair). You can also add some essential oils, such as sandalwood or ylang ylang.

## Solving Specific Hair Problems

In addition to the basic problems of oily, dry and frizzy hair there are several other specific hair and scalp problems that you can approach using herbal remedies.

### Dandruff

Dandruff is composed of dead skin cells from the scalp that come off in white flakes. It may be the result of too much sebum clogging pores and causing dead skin cells to stick together. In this case, the previously mentioned remedies for oily hair will be helpful.



Dandruff may also involve an inflamed, dry scalp, a condition known as seborrheic dermatitis (or just seb derm). In small children seb derm is called cradle cap. In this case, remedies for dry hair may be helpful. Sensitivity to chemicals in hair care products can also cause this inflammation in the scalp.

Inflammation of the sebaceous glands has also been linked to a fungus called *Malassezia*. This fungus is always present on the

scalp but becomes a problem when overly active. Anything that weakens the immune system, including stress and poor diet, can increase susceptibility to this type of fungus.

Essential oils that fight fungal infections can be added to shampoos or used in masks to fight dandruff. These oils include tea tree, rosemary, eucalyptus, and sandalwood. If the scalp tends to be dry add these essential oils to a coconut or olive oil. If the scalp is red and irritated, try aloe vera gel. Apple cider vinegar may also be used to ease scalp irritation.

## Hair Loss and Alopecia

Hair loss may be temporary. When it results in baldness, it is called alopecia. Loss of hair is partly genetic, but there are things that can be done to prevent it. If large amounts of hair come out when you brush or shampoo your hair, here are some things to consider.



Lack of adequate protein in the diet or difficulty in digesting and assimilating protein is one possible cause. If your diet is low in protein, increase consumption of protein-rich foods. If you have a hard time digesting them, take a betaine hydrochloric acid (HCl) supplement or a *Digestive Enzyme Formula* as mentioned earlier.

Minerals can also aid hair growth. Consider taking *Watkins Hair, Skin, and Nails Formula*. It is often helpful in the early stages of hair loss.

Stress can cause hair to thin. If you are under a lot of stress, try using adaptogens to ease your stress. The *Chinese Mineral Qi Adaptogen Formula* provides both minerals to support healthy hair and herbs to help reduce your stress level.

A common cause of temporary hair loss in women is low thyroid. In this case an *Herbal Hypothyroid Formula* containing seaweeds like kelp, dulse, and Irish moss may be helpful. A *Thyroid Glandular* may also help. If these don't correct the problem you may want to check for Hashimoto's thyroiditis, which is an autoimmune problem and get help with correcting this problem. Natural therapy may involve avoiding gluten and taking supplements that balance immune activity.

In men, problems with testosterone metabolism can cause hair loss and eventual baldness (alopecia). Remedies that may help prevent this include he shou wu, maca, and muira puama. Again, consult with a natural healer for additional guidance.

Sage and rosemary essential oils can also be used topically on the scalp to encourage circulation to the scalp, which can also help to prevent or slow hair loss. Simply add a few drops of both of these oils to your shampoo.

## Gray Hair

Hair gets its color from a pigment called melanin, which is produced by special cells in the hair follicles. These cells become damaged and unable to provide color to the hair. This is possibly caused by a build up of hydrogen peroxide, which causes oxidative

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This issue of *Sunshine Sharing* is provided by:

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damage to these cells. Mineral deficiencies may also be involved as trace minerals like copper and zinc help to give hair its color.

Stress appears to contribute to more rapid graying of the hair and this may be related to deficiencies of B-vitamins like vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid), B6, B9, and B12, which can be depleted by stress. If this is the case, an *Anti-Stress B-Complex Supplement* will help. Again, the *Chinese Mineral Qi Adaptogen Formula* provides both minerals and stress-relieving nutrients. Finally, the shou wu has a reputation in China as an herb that can prevent or reverse graying if taken regularly.

## Head Lice

Lice are tiny insects that can infest hair. A louse is about the size of a sesame seed and both the insects and their eggs (known as nits) are visible in the hair. They can cause itchy scalp and are easily spread from one person to another.



If the infestation isn't too severe there are several home remedies that can be tried. Adding essential oils like lavender, tea tree, and eucalyptus oil to shampoo will help repel, but not kill head lice. You'll also need something to kill the lice. Shampoos are available that help to kill the lice or you can make your own using a *Standardized Paw Paw Extract*. Here are the directions.

Open ten capsules of *Standardized Paw Paw Extract* and mix them with one ounce (two tablespoons) of pure grain alcohol (EverClear) or isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) in a small glass container. Cover and let stand until the particles have settled. After the particles have settled, carefully pour off the liquid and set it aside.

Then add two more tablespoons of alcohol to the paw paw material and repeat the above process. Put the liquid from the two extractions into a saucer and allow the alcohol to evaporate. Once the alcohol has evaporated, mix the material in the saucer with two tablespoons of shampoo. Make sure it is thoroughly mixed.

Add seven drops of thyme essential oil and 4 drops of tea tree oil. Then use the shampoo exactly as follows.

Lather two tablespoons of shampoo into dry hair and scalp. Place a shower cap/hair net on head to contain shampoo and to protect the eyes. Leave shampoo lather on the hair for 60 minutes. Then, rinse the shampoo thoroughly from hair and scalp. After rinsing out the shampoo, dry and comb hair thoroughly with lice comb and remove nits/lice.

Repeat the above process eight days later and again 16 days later to ensure complete removal. Note: Long or thick hair will require one additional tablespoon of shampoo and will need to remain on head an additional 15 minutes.

## Other Scalp Problems

*Tinea capitis* is a fungal infection that affects the scalp and hair shafts. It's caused by the same fungus that causes ringworm. It causes itchy, flaky patches on the scalp and can cause scalp pain, brittle hair, and hair loss. Add antifungal essential oils like lavender, tea tree, and thyme to shampoo. You can also mix them with a *Silver Gel* and apply the mixture topically like a hair mask.

*Lichen planus* (LP) is an inflammatory disorder that affects the skin and mucus membranes. To reduce irritation make a mask with aloe vera gel. Add chamomile, turmeric, sandalwood essential oil or other anti-inflammatory remedies to the mask.

Eczema, psoriasis, and other skin conditions can also affect the scalp. Talk to your herbalist or natural healer for assistance with these and other scalp and hair problems.

## Additional Help and Information

For more information about natural remedies for the scalp and hair contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

<https://www.hairbuddha.net/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/herbs-for-hair-growth>

<https://blog.mountainroseherbs.com/7-best-herbs-for-natural-hair-care>

*Strategies for Health* by Steven Horne