

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S Herbal Legacy Newsletter

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Trichology, the study of hair, teaches that hair is fiber. There isn't much difference chemically between the hair on your head and fine wool that comes off a pashmina goat. Think about how you would care for a cashmere sweater verses how you care for your hair. Avoid constantly washing it with harmful detergents and drying on high temperatures. Doing this will strip away all the natural oil and cause it to become dry and dull.

Here is a quick trick on how to find out the health of your hair. Take 4 strands of hair, 1 strand each from the top, the bottom and each side of the head. Put each strand in a bowl of water. If the hair floats it is in great shape. If it sinks within 5-15 seconds, then it is porous and needs conditioning.

I remember watching old movies in which women would sit in front of a mirror and brush their hair 100 times before going to bed. There is actually merit to this because it distributes the hair's natural oils. Using a natural bristle brush is best. The natural bristles effectively move the oil from the scalp through the hair. Brushing the scalp also stimulates the sebaceous glands, which in turn produce more sebum, the skin's own protective layer. Jojoba based oil conditioners are great for your hair because it is much like the skin's natural oil, sebum.



The scalp is like any skin on the body, it must be kept healthy to ensure healthy hair production. A chemical-free way of shampooing is the best way to remove dead skin cells and toxins that are released through the skin. One reason you want to stay away from detergent based shampoo, is that it contains a common chemical used by the cosmetic industry called sodium lauryl/laureth sulfate (SLS/SLAS). This is very toxic and contains potent carcinogens. The chemicals you place on your skin (scalp) absorb straight into your bloodstream without filtering of any kind. Chemical-free shampoos will help prevent any toxins from being absorbed into the skin.

For straight hair, shampoo twice per week. For wavy hair, shampoo once or twice per week, and for curly or kinky hair, only every other week. Between washings you can use dry shampoos or herbal rinses to keep your scalp clean and smelling fresh. A great rinse to try is; 1 part vinegar to 2 parts water with some added essential oils (rosemary and lavender are good ones to use). This will close the hair follicles, prevent color loss, dissolve any soap scum and add shine to the hair.

Genetics, health and proper nutrition are also important factors in healthy hair. The living part of hair is under the scalp, where the root is housed in the hair follicle. The hair follicle is fed by a vein, which carries nutrients from the blood to the root system. Medical conditions, changes in hormones, stress, trauma, smoking and so much more can affect hair growth and appearance. Eating a diet full of healthy proteins, fruits, vegetables, good fats, and complex carbohydrates is important.

Essential omega-3 fatty acids, protein, vitamin B12 and **iron**, prevent a dry scalp and dull hair color. Dark green vegetables contain high amounts of vitamins A and C. These vitamins help with sebum production and provide a natural hair conditioner. Legumes provide protein to promote hair growth, and also contain iron, zinc and biotin. A deficiency in biotin can cause brittle hair and can also lead to hair loss. Nuts contain high sources of selenium, alpha-linoleic acid and zinc, all of which help condition the hair and prevent hair shedding. Protein deficiencies can produce weak and brittle hair, and can eventually result in loss of hair color. A balanced diet is extremely necessary for a healthy scalp and furthermore healthy hair.

Here are some great resources for more information:

-For plant based natural hair color, visit <http://www.greenhare.com>. Chemical hair dye is very toxic to the body.

-For chemical free shampoo, I have been testing a natural shampoo bar from <http://www.annbeesnaturals.com>. The first wash was a bit strange to me, yet I was told it would be. It takes time for your scalp and hair to adjust. Now I'm really enjoying it. I just basically wash my scalp. My hair seems to be styling well and looking good. I have short hair so I'm not sure how it would work with someone who has longer hair. The company also has a hair and skin oil conditioner, called Moroccan Silk, that I really like.

-Visit <http://www.drchristophersherbshop.com> to purchase chemical free, BF&C Shampoo and Conditioner, and/or BF&C Hair and Scalp massage oil.

-In Dr. Christopher's book, *Every Woman's Herbal* under Hair Loss, are the instructions for the 3 oil massage to stimulate hair growth and nourish the scalp. There is also a great herbal rinse recipe under Gray Hair.

Mishelle Knuteson is certified in Rapid Eye Technology (RET) an emotional release therapy, teaches classes in *The Art of Feminine Presence* and a Master Herbalist ~ graduate of The School of Natural Healing. Mishelle currently works as an Educative Master Herbalist (MH) for The School of Natural Healing and as Office Manager of Christopher Publications.