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## **Healthy-hair and nails recipes that have stood the test of time**

### **These tried and tested home-made natural preparations from grandmother's time can encourage hair growth and improve the condition of your hair and scalp**

A wide range of herbal ingredients has been used through the ages to improve and enhance what nature provided.

Usually producers of hair care products operate four hair types: dry, greasy, normal or "problem" hair, but herbal trichologists state that all hair is normal for that person and problems should first be dealt with by looking holistically at a person: that is, looking at his or her lifestyle. Too many spicy foods, fats and sugars can be responsible for greasy hair and synthetic shampoos can create dry hair. There is also concern about the effects that medicated shampoos can have on the hair and scalp if used routinely. Stress, hormonal changes, lack of sleep, too much sun, chemical hair treatments, rinses and dyes all cause hair problems too.

#### **Hair treatments**

Dry hair and any hair lacking luster will benefit from a warm oil treatment before a shampoo. Make a herbal oil using one of the above herbs and a polyunsaturated vegetable oil such as peach kernel, almond or sunflower. Alternatively, add 6 drops of essential oil to 2 tbsp (30 ml) of almond oil or any vegetable oil. Warm the oil, pour a small amount into your palm and rub your hands together. Massage well into the scalp and along the hair strands. Repeat as necessary. Cover the head with foil and a plastic shower cap and wrap in a hot towel when it cools. Try to leave on for 20 to 30 minutes for greatest penetration, then wash off with a mild shampoo.

#### **HERBAL SHAMPOOS**

##### **A quick herbal shampoo**

Pour one application of a mild baby shampoo in to a cap and add 2tbsp (30 ml) of a strong decoction of your selected herb, or 4 drops of essential oil. Mix together and use in the normal manner.

##### **Henna & Egg Shampoo**

5 tbsp. natural henna powder  
1 egg  
1 cup warm water  
juice of 1/2 lemon

Prepare a thick paste by mixing the egg and the henna into the warm water. Leave the mixture to set for one hour, then add the lemon juice to fix the colour. Apply gently and thoroughly to hair and scalp. For best results, wait for at least two hours or until completely dry before rinsing out hair

This shampoo, used for centuries in India and the Middle East, has now found its way to the West. Natural henna will leave your hair strengthened and shinier, adding a light brown tinge to it. It also acts as a natural coolant for the scalp.

## HERBAL HAIR RINSES

### Apple Vinegar Rinse

1 litre cold water  
1 tsp. apple vinegar

Mix together water and apple vinegar and rinse through hair. This blend of apple vinegar and water is used as a conditioner to add shine, or just as a treatment for the hair itself.

### Several fixes for flakes

If you are plagued with dandruff, follow one or more of these natural remedies:

- \* **Spike your shampoo.** Add 3-4 drops of tea tree oil (*Melaleuca alternifolia*), an antiseptic herb, to a palm-size amount of gentle shampoo just before washing your hair.
- \* **Massage your scalp** while shampooing to loosen flakes, but avoid scratching, which will create sores.
- \* **Rinse with antiseptic herbs.** Boil 2 rounded tablespoons of dried herb (or herbs mixture) in 1 cup of water for 5 to 7 minutes. Cool, strain, and massage tea through shampooed hair and into your scalp. Do not rinse out.
- \* **Get you biotin.** This vitamin like nutrient may prevent and treat dandruff. Good sources include brewer's yeast, cheese, and rice bran.
- \* **Reduce stress.** Dandruff (and other skin conditions such as eczema) can be worsened by high levels of stress. Practice yoga or tai chi, take [natural antidepressants](#) and meditate.

#### Herbs for skin disorders:

Thyme, Mayweed,  
Burdock leaf,  
Psyllium leaf,  
Nettles common leaf,  
Saint-john`s-wort,  
Marigold flower,  
Horse tail,  
Sage, Yarrow  
Greater celandine

- 1 tsp. rosemary oil
- 1 tsp. basil oil
- 1 tsp. lavender oil

- 1 tbsp. burdock oil
- 1 tbsp. aloe vera gel

In a dark glass bottle, combine 1 teaspoon each of rosemary, basil and lavender essential oils. Mix 5 drops of this mixture with 1 tablespoon of burdock oil and 1 tablespoon of aloe vera gel. Massage it into your scalp a few hours before shampooing your hair. Burdock oil is used to improve hair strength, shine and body, and combat hair loss. It was also used as a herbal remedy to get rid of dandruff and scalp itching, and to promote healing of skin and scalp conditions. Modern studies indicate that burdock-root oil extract is rich in phytosterols and essential fatty acids, nutrients required for a healthy scalp and natural hair growth. Massaging your scalp with essential oils can stimulate hair growth.

### Variants of massage-oil

- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tbsp. cognac
- 1 tbsp. burdock oil
- 1 tbsp. castor oil
- 1 tbsp. onion juice

### Herbs used in hair care:

**To condition dry hair** burdock root, comfrey, elderflowers, marsh mallow, parsley, sage, stinging nettle.

**To condition greasy hair** calendula, horsetail, lemon juice, lemon balm, lavender, mints, rosemary, southernwood, witch hazel and yarrow.

**To prevent dandruff** burdock root, chamomile, garlic and onion bulbs (powerful but unpleasantly scented), goosegrass, parsley, rosemary, southernwood, stinging, nettle and thyme.

**To soothe scalp irritation** catmint (leaves and flowering tops), chamomile, comfrey.

**To provide a hair tonic (giving body and luster)** calendula, goosgrass, horsetail, lime flowers, nasturtium, parsley, rosemary, sage, southernwood, stinging nettles and watercress.

**To dispel lice** an infusion of quassia chips, poke root, or juniper berries with a tablespoon of cider vinegar. Apply at two-week intervals, three times.


