NATURE has bestowed mankind hair that is the crown of our beauty. We spend a large part of our life grooming and styling our hair. No wonder hair spas and hair clinics are mushrooming everywhere and doing brisk business too. Hair has become a prized possession today. You neglect it at your own peril.

Hair is nothing more than an elongated structure made up of a special protein called keratin. A single hair consists of a hair shaft (the part that shows), a root below the skin, and a follicle, from which the hair root grows. At the lower end of the follicle is the hair bulb, where the hair’s colour pigment or melanin is produced.

There are different types of hair like dry hair, oily hair and balanced hair. Each hair type needs a different type of care. It is normal to lose 50-100 hairs a day. These hairs are replaced, they grow back in the same follicle on your head. But if you are losing more than that, hair loss deserves attention. There are many things that aggregate the problems of hair loss such as stress, prolonged illness, fungal infections, aging, low thyroid, various chemical agents, certain kinds of drugs and hormonal imbalance.

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow…

The Choice is Yours

General Hair Care Tips

- Massage the head with oil for 15-20 minutes, leave it for 2 to 3 hours (or overnight) and rinse with a shampoo. This helps your hair pores get rejuvenated.
- Apply conditioner only to your hair, not to the scalp or hair roots. After washing hair, rub the scalp with fingers till you feel some warmth in your fingers as well as scalp. This activates the sebaceous glands to secrete oil for hair growth and also improves blood circulation.
- Style your hair when it is dry or damp. Try to avoid teasing your hair, as it can cause damage.
- Feel relaxed and free from stress in your life.
- Develop the habit of eating all types of vegetables and fruits to ensure supply of vitamins and minerals essential for healthy hair.
- Crush a few leaves and flowers of hibiscus (shoe flower) with two or three glasses of water and use it to wash hair.
- Make a mixture of honey and egg yolk. Massage the scalp and hair with this preparation and leave for half an hour before washing.
- Apply honey on your scalp to solve the problem of tangled and frizzy hair. Mix honey in two cups of fresh cream to create an excellent natural hair product for dry hair.
- To reduce production of excess oil from hair, wash it regularly with fuller’s earth (multani mitti).
- Apply and massage with a mixture of castor, mustard and coconut oil – this prevents dandruff.
Although hair care and treatment of hair loss can be done using hair weaving and use of synthetic products, these methods are expensive and often use toxic drugs, which have side effects. Therefore, it is best to make use of some reliable hair care methods such as with the use of common herbs, oils and a nutritious diet.

Here are some suggestions for preparing decoctions using common herbs that could keep your hair healthy.

**Bhringraj** (*Eclipta alba*): The preparation can be made by boiling the leaves and mixing the liquid produced with coconut oil or sesame oil. The mixture, when applied to the hair, imparts colour to it.

**Arishtaka** (*Sapindus trifoliatus*): The herb is commonly known as soapberry. Soap nuts are known as excellent hair tonics and thus have found use in shampoos and cleansers. Fruits have tonic and astringent properties, and are used for removing lice from the scalp due to its insecticidal properties. Soap nuts should be boiled in water and cooled. Wash your hair with this mixture to help control hair loss.

**Shikakai** (*Acacia concinna*): Shikakai is a small shrub-like tree whose fruits promote hair growth and prevent dandruff. Mix well two eggs, two tablespoons of amla, reetha and shikakai powder. Massage on the scalp, leave it on for five minutes and rinse well.

**Amla** (*Emblica officinalis*): Amla stimulates the hair roots, promotes hair growth, strengthens hair, prevents scalp infections and controls early greying of hair. Boil some dry pieces of Amla in coconut oil and massage your hair with this preparation. Applying a mixture of lemon and amla juice to the scalp also helps in controlling dandruff.

**Henna** (*Inermis Lawsonia*): Henna is a natural conditioner that helps in repairing and sealing the cuticle, protects hair against damage and loss of shine. Henna has also found use in dandruff treatment and in hair loss. Take 250 grams of mustard oil and 60 grams of Henna leaves and boil them till the leaves get totally burnt. Filter the oil and massage the scalp regularly with this oil.

**Chaulai-ka-saag** (*Amaranthus*): Take some fresh leaves of Amaranth and grind them. Apply this juice on your hair. It helps in hair growth and makes the hair soft.

**Neem** (*Azadiractha indica*): Wash hair with a decoction of margosa leaves (Neem). This will prevent hair loss. It also has strong antibacterial properties protecting your hair from lice and dandruff. Margosa treatment will also stimulate scalp blood circulation. Neem oil also helps with thinning hair and premature greying.

**Fennel** (*Foeniculum vulgare*): Make a paste of fennel seeds and water. Apply on scalp and leave for about half an hour and wash it off. Do it regularly for one month to treat hair loss. It contains lecithin and other useful proteins, which help in hair growth.

**Aloe vera**: Mix Aloe Vera with Triphala. Triphala is a herbal powder consisting of equal parts of three herbs – Amla (*Emblica officinalis*), Bibhitaki (*Terminalia Bellirica*), and Haritaki (*Terminalia Chebula*). Apply this mixture to hair regularly for 3-6 months. It helps in growth of new hair. Massage coconut milk or Aloe Vera gel into the scalp and hair. Leave it for half an hour, and then rinse with warm water.

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Apply and massage with a mixture of castor, mustard and coconut oil – this prevents dandruff.

Your hair is your crowning glory, do not neglect it!

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