

Top 6 Vitamins for Hair Growth (#2 Is Essential)



The appearance of hair plays an important role in people's physical appearance and self-perception, so it can be devastating to experience hair loss, especially when there doesn't seem to be anything you can do about it. But did you know that there are vitamins for hair growth? In fact, poor nutrition, including vitamin deficiencies, is a major factor of hair loss. These natural **hair loss remedies** work to fix the root of the problem, like regulating your hormone levels or fighting oxidative stress that increases with age.

Fewer than 45 percent of women go through life with a full head of hair while a majority of men go through some type of hair loss in their lifetimes. The hair care industry knows that consumers have a great desire to look youthful now more than ever so it constantly delivers new products that promise to promote hair growth. Before you spend your money on yet another product that may leave you disappointed, try using these vitamins for hair growth (or hair vitamins as I sometimes call them) first.

6 Vitamins for Hair Growth

The truth is that hair loss is a complex process that involves various genetic, hormonal and environmental mechanisms. Just like our skin, the hair follicle is subject to intrinsic and extrinsic aging. Intrinsic factors include our genetic and epigenetic mechanisms, and extrinsic factors include smoking and UV radiation.

Sometimes hair loss is due to a vitamin deficiency too. Luckily, a deficiency can be corrected by adding vitamin-rich foods to your diet or using supplementation. Some vitamins have antioxidant properties that help to fight the extrinsic factors of hair loss, and some vitamins help the body **balance hormone** levels, another factor that stops hair growth.

Try these healthy hair vitamins if you're wonder **how to thicken hair** naturally.

1. Fish Oil

Oils rich in different fatty acid species have been used extensively in both animal and human studies to evaluate the effects on skin and hair health. Omega-3 fats nourish the hair, support hair thickening and reduce inflammation that can lead to hair loss, which is why **fish oil benefits** hair and is one of the top six vitamins for hair growth.

A 2015 study published in the *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology* evaluated the effects of a six-month supplementation with omega-3, omega-6 and antioxidants on hair loss. In the randomized, comparative study, 120 healthy female subjects with female pattern hair loss participated. The primary endpoint was the change in hair density evaluated on standardized photographs, and the secondary endpoint included changes in active hair follicle percentage and diameter distribution of hair growth.

After six months of treatment, photograph assessment demonstrated a superior improvement in the supplemented group. Hair growth increased compared to the control group, and 89.9 percent of the participants reported a reduction in hair loss, as well as an improvement in hair diameter (86 percent) and hair density (87 percent). (1)

Eat **omega-3 foods** like salmon, mackerel, tuna, white fish, sardines, egg yolks, walnuts, hemp seeds and natto to reduce inflammation and balance hormones. If you don't eat enough omega-3 foods, take one to two capsules or one tablespoon of a top-notch fish oil supplement to help reduce inflammation that causes hair disorders. If you already take blood-thinning medications, including **aspirin**, speak to your health care provider before using fish oil because it may increase bleeding.

2. Zinc

Oral zinc compounds have been used for decades for treating disorders such as telogen effluvium and alopecia areata, forms of hair loss, because **zinc benefits** hair follicle health. Zinc is an essential co-factor for multiple enzymes and is involved with important functional activities in the hair follicle. Zinc is also a potent inhibitor of hair follicle regression, and it accelerates hair follicle recovery. Studies suggest that some alopecia areata patients have **zinc deficiency**, and oral zinc sulfate therapy serves as an effective treatment.

In a 2013 study, researchers evaluated the role of zinc status in each of the four types of hair loss, including alopecia areata, male pattern hair loss, female pattern hair loss and telogen effluvium. In all of the hair loss patients, the mean serum zinc was significantly lower than the control group. The analysis of each group showed that all groups of hair loss had statistically lower zinc concentration, especially the alopecia areata group. The data led to the hypothesis of zinc metabolism disturbances playing a key role in hair loss. (2)

A 2009 study published in *Annals of Dermatology* evaluated the therapeutic effects of oral zinc supplementation for 12 weeks in 15 alopecia areata patients who had low serum zinc levels. Oral zinc gluconate (50 milligrams) supplementation was given to alopecia areata patients without any other treatment. The serum zinc levels were measured before and after zinc supplementation, and then a four-point scale of hair regrowth was used to evaluate the therapeutic effect.

After the therapy, the serum zinc levels increased significantly, and positive therapeutic effects were observed for nine out of 15 patients (66.7 percent). The researchers concluded that zinc supplementation needs to be given to the alopecia areata patients who have a low serum zinc level, and it could even become an adjuvant therapy for patients who didn't experience results when using traditional therapeutic methods, which is why zinc is one of the most important vitamins for hair growth. (3)

3. B-Complex Vitamin (Biotin & B5)

Biotin and pantothenic acid (vitamin B5) have been used as alternative treatments for hair loss. **Biotin benefits** your hair by rebuilding hair shingles that have been damaged from over-shampooing, exposure to the sun, blow-drying and ironing. Vitamin B5 supports the adrenal glands, which helps stimulate hair growth.

A 2011 study published in the *British Journal of Dermatology* examined the ability of a leave-on combination including panthenol, the alcohol analog of pantothenic acid, to affect the diameter and behavior of individual terminal scalp hair fibers. The treatment significantly increased the diameter of individual, existing terminal scalp fibers. It also thickened hair fibers and increased the pliability, giving the hairs better ability to withstand force without breaking. (4)

A major sign of a biotin deficiency is hair loss. A deficiency can be caused by smoking, impaired liver function or even pregnancy. Research suggests that a substantial number of women develop a biotin deficiency during normal pregnancy because the rapidly dividing cells of the developing fetus require biotin for synthesis of essential carboxylases and histone biotinylation. Researchers conclude that significant alternations in markers of biotin metabolism during pregnancy and breast-feeding suggest that biotin intakes exceed current recommendations in order to meet the demands of these reproductive states. (5)

To **reverse hair loss** and increase hair strength, take one B-complex vitamin tablet daily or take biotin and vitamin B5 separately. Eating biotin and **vitamin B5 foods**, such as eggs, beef, chicken, avocado, legumes, nuts and potatoes, also helps you to avoid a deficiency and aid hair growth.

Vitamins for Hair Growth



1

Fish Oil

Take 1-2 capsules or 1 tbsp of fish oil daily to help reduce inflammation that causes hair disorders. Food sources: Mackerel, salmon, tuna, white fish, herring, walnuts, flax-seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, natto and egg yolks

2

B-Complex Vitamin

Take 1 tablet daily. Food sources: eggs, beef, chicken, avocado, legumes, nuts and potatoes will also help you to avoid a deficiency and aid hair growth



3



Iron

Take a multivitamin daily. Food sources: Spinach, swiss chard, collard greens, egg yolks, beef steak, navy beans and black beans.

4

Vitamin C

Take 500–1,000 mg of vitamin C twice daily as an antioxidant. Food sources: oranges, red peppers, kale, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, strawberries, grapefruit and kiwi



5

Vitamin D

Take 5,000 units of vitamin D per day or sit in direct sunlight for 10–15 minutes. Food sources: halibut, mackerel, eel, salmon, whitefish, swordfish, maitake mushrooms and portobello mushrooms



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4. Vitamin C

Experimental evidence suggests that oxidative stress plays a major role in the aging process. Reactive oxygen species or free radicals are highly reactive molecules that can directly damage cellular structural membranes, lipids, proteins and DNA.

With age, the production of free radicals increases and the amount of antioxidative enzymes that defend the body decrease, leading to the damage of cellular structures and the aging of hair. By working as an antioxidant, vitamin C fights oxidative stress that contributes to hair graying and hair loss. (6)

To **fight free radical damage** and protect the hair from aging, fill up on **vitamin C foods** like oranges, red peppers, kale, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, strawberries, grapefruit and kiwi. If you need supplementation, take 500–1,000 milligrams of vitamin C twice daily as an antioxidant.

5. Iron

Several studies have examined the relationship between **iron deficiency** and hair loss, and some suggest that iron deficiency may be related to alopecia areata, androgenetic alopecia, telogen effluvium and diffuse hair loss. (7)

Researchers at Tehran University of Medical Sciences in Iran studied the relationship between iron body status and different types of hair loss. They conducted an analytical case-control study to assess whether diffuse telogen hair loss in women between the ages of 15 and 45 is associated with iron deficiency – 30 women with documented telogen hair loss were compared with 30 women without hair loss.

The researchers found that of the nine patients with iron deficiency anemia, eight had telogen hair loss. The mean **ferritin** (a protein in the body that binds to iron) level was statistically significantly lower in patients with diffuse telogen hair loss than in subjects without hair loss. The study suggests that women with an iron deficiency are at a higher risk of hair loss, and serum ferritin levels below or equal to 30 milligrams/milliliter are strongly associated with telogen hair loss. (8)

To boost hair growth, add **iron-rich foods** into your diet every day. Eat plenty of spinach, Swiss chard, collard greens, egg yolks, beef steak, navy beans and black beans. Because an iron deficiency may lead to hair loss, ensure that you get your daily recommended amount by eating plenty of iron-rich foods and taking a daily multivitamin.

However, be wary of excessive iron supplementation. It can cause iron overload and should be avoided. Patients who don't respond to iron replacement therapy should undergo additional testing to identify other underlying causes of iron deficiency and hair loss.

6. Vitamin D

Hair follicles are highly sensitive to hormones, and vitamin D is a hormone that plays an important role in calcium homeostasis, immune regulation and cell growth differentiation. In the scientific world, it's well-known that alopecia areata is commonly found in patients with **vitamin D deficiency**, vitamin D-resistant rickets or vitamin D receptor mutation. (9)

Research suggests that insufficient levels of vitamin D have been implicated in a variety of autoimmune diseases, including alopecia areata. A cross-sectional study involving 86 patients with alopecia areata, 44 patients with vitiligo and 58 healthy controls was conducted. Serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels in patients with alopecia areata were significantly lower than those of the patients with vitiligo and the healthy controls. Furthermore, a significant inverse correlation was found between disease severity and serum 25(OH)D levels in patients with alopecia.

Researchers concluded that screening patients with alopecia areata for vitamin D deficiencies seem to be of value for the possibility of supplementing these patients with vitamin D. (10)

Direct sun exposure is the best way to absorb vitamin D, plus you can **detox your body with the sun**. Sit in the sun for roughly 10–15 minutes to absorb about 10,000 units of natural vitamin D. Topical application of vitamin D might also play a role in the restoration of hair cycle dysfunction in patients with alopecia areata. To increase your vitamin D levels with food sources, eat **vitamin D-rich foods** like halibut, mackerel, eel, salmon, whitefish, swordfish, maitake mushrooms and portabella mushrooms.

Herbs and Foods for Hair Growth

Though not vitamins, two other products can help improve hair growth. Rosemary essential oil used topically can naturally thicken hair, as can aloe vera juice and gel. Using these along with the above vitamins for hair growth, and you're sure to see fuller, thicker hair.

Rosemary Essential Oil

When applied over the scalp, **rosemary oil** is believed to increase cellular metabolism that stimulates hair growth. A 2013 study conducted at Kinki University in Japan found that rosemary leaf extract improved hair regrowth in mice that experienced hair regrowth interruption induced by testosterone treatment. (11)

A human study conducted in 2015 investigated the clinical efficacy of rosemary oil in the treatment of androgenetic alopecia. Patients with androgenetic alopecia were treated for six months with either rosemary oil or **minoxidil** (2 percent), which served as a the control group. Minoxidil is a medication used to stimulate hair growth and slow balding.

After six months of treatment, both groups experienced a significant increase in hair count. Scalp itching, however, was more frequent in the minoxidil group. The study proves that rosemary oil is just as effective as hair growth medications, with less side effects, such as scalp itching. (12)

Try this **Rosemary, Cedarwood & Safe Hair Thickener** to reverse the signs of hair loss.

Aloe Vera Juice and Gel

Aloe vera has nourishing properties and tons of vitamins and minerals that help to keep your hair strong and healthy. **Aloe vera benefits** have been known for centuries because of aloe vera contains health, beauty, medicinal and skin care properties. It soothes and conditions the scalp, providing the ideal environment for hair growth.

You can apply aloe vera gel directly to the scalp or add it to a gentle and natural shampoo. To take aloe vera internally, drink about a half a cup of aloe vera juice twice daily. The healing properties boost your dermatological health.

A 2012 study published in *Anatomy & Cell Biology* found that aloe vera gel reduced inflammation and had notable wound-healing effects when used on rats after a surgical incision. Not only did aloe vera promote rapid wound closure, but it also enhanced hair growth at the site on incision.

(13)

Aloe vera has also been reported to have a protective effect against radiation damage to the skin, which can lead to hair loss. Following the administration of aloe vera gel, an antioxidant protein called metallothionein is generated in the skin, which scavenges free radicals and prevents UV-induced suppression. (14)

Because of aloe vera's antibacterial and antifungal properties, it also helps eliminate dandruff — perfect for people who want fuller hair and want to know **how to get rid of dandruff** — and the gel's enzymes can rid the scalp of dead cells and promote the regeneration of skin tissue around the hair follicles.

What Stops Hair Growth?

Hair is considered to be a major component of an individual's general appearance, and the psychological impact of hair loss results in detrimental changes in self-esteem and self-worth. It also affects a large number of people, as 50 percent of men are affected by genetic hair loss by the age of 50. In women, the major cause of hair loss before the age of 50 is nutritional, with 30 percent affected. The main cause of hair loss for women appears to be depleted iron stores, but corrections of these imbalances can stop the excessive hair loss within a few months. (15)

Factors that inhibit hair growth include:

- Poor nutrition
- Hormonal changes
- Family history
- Medications
- Radiation therapy.
- Pregnancy
- Thyroid disorders
- Anemia
- Autoimmune diseases
- **Polycystic ovary syndrome**
- Skin conditions (such as psoriasis and seborrheic dermatitis)
- Stress
- Dramatic weight loss
- Physical trauma

Types of Hair Loss

Alopecia Areata — Alopecia areata is considered an autoimmune disease in which the immune system mistakenly attacks the hair follicles. The effected hair follicles become small and drastically slow down hair production. Researchers believe that some type of trigger, such as a virus or vitamin deficiency, may bring on the attack. (16)

Male Pattern Hair Loss — Male pattern hair loss is also known as androgenic alopecia. This is the most common type of hair loss in men, and one major cause is genetics or having a family history of baldness. Research suggests that it's associated with androgens, which work to regulate hair growth. (17)

Female Pattern Hair Loss — Female pattern hair loss or baldness occurs when hair follicles shrink over time. Typically, each time a normal hair follicle is shed, it's then replaced by hair that's equal in size. For women with female pattern hair loss, the new hair is finer and thinner. The hair follicles start by shrinking in this way, and eventually they quit growing altogether. This can be caused by aging, changes in androgen (male hormone) levels, or a family history of male or female pattern baldness. (18, 19)

Telogen Effluvium — Telogen effluvium is the second most common form of hair loss, and it's characterized as different phases of the hair growth cycle. The telogen phase is when the scalp does not produce hair; it's also known as the resting phase. Typically, 80 percent to 90 percent of the hair follicles are growing at one time, but with telogen effluvium, the number of hair follicles producing hair drops significantly during the resting phase, resulting in shedding or hair loss. (20)

Vitamins for Hair Growth Takeaways

- A major contributor to hair loss is poor nutrition, resulting in vitamin deficiencies.

- Studies show that women with an iron deficiency are at a higher risk of hair loss, and serum ferritin levels below or equal to 30 milligrams/milliliter are strongly associated with telogen hair loss. Low serum zinc levels have also been linked to alopecia areata cases.
- Oils rich in different fatty acid species have been used extensively in both animal and human studies to evaluate the effects on skin and hair health, while there is strong evidence that supports certain vitamins for hair growth.
- Free radical damage can cause hair aging, and vitamin C can help protect the scalp and hair follicles from this major hair growth inhibitor.
- Biotin and pantothenic acid (vitamin B5) have been used as alternative treatments for hair loss. Biotin rebuilds hair shingles, and vitamin B5 supports the adrenal glands.
- Research suggests that insufficient levels of vitamin D have been implicated in a variety of autoimmune diseases, including alopecia areata.

Read Next: Secrets for Reversing Hair Loss and Balancing Hormones

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