

How a Well Balanced Diet and 10 Tips Can Get Your Hair Growing Healthier, Thicker, and Faster

By: Saurin Gandhi August 18, 2011

[This is in response to **Anonymous**' Question: Tips to Grow Healthier, Longer Hair, FAST. Thank You.]

Now I can't guarantee that I can get you Rapunzel-type hair, but I can offer some tips to get your hair to grow healthy, thick, and fast. What is ironic about health care is that we are technically spending an awful amount of time on hair, which is dead tissue¹. This however is not a cause that is worth dropping. The hair that we praise so much on others because of the obvious factors of style and color serves a biological process as well, keeping your head warm and regulating body temperature. In order to keep this epidermal extension healthy for the time that it remains on your head, there are quite a few things you can do to keep your hair healthy, shiny, and thick. The phrase 'we are what we eat,' applies to not only our overall health, but also how hair reflects our eating habits. Fact is that since hair is essentially keratin, a protein, the nourishment your hair needs is not found only in shampoo and conditioner, but rather you need a well-balanced diet that includes a lot of protein and iron, and in some cases even fat.

Protein Boost:

Most women are scared of consuming a large amount of protein in fear of developing muscles in places they don't want them. What most women don't know is that you should be more afraid of not having enough muscle than having too much. Previous studies have found that in the process of muscle loss, 'sarcopenia,' women on average lose a half pound of muscle each year beginning at 25. Less muscle slows down your metabolism, and can result in gaining fat. Now how this relates to hair health. Based on studies regarding women's necessary protein intake, if women are not getting 35-50 grams of protein per day, you can get thinning hair. Consuming a large amount of protein from sources such as soy, dairy, nuts, certain lean meats, fish, and eggs can provide the protein as well as essential omega-3 fatty acids and Vitamin B12, two essentials thinning hair lacks.



Antioxidants:

You can't say enough about antioxidants. From my previous articles I have dived into the diverse effects and benefits antioxidants can have on your body, and healthy hair is another one of its perks. It can keep your hair thick and healthy. Foods that fall under this category can be divided into four different bright color groups². These include:



RED: strawberries, cherries, pomegranates, watermelon, tomatoes and peppers

ORANGE: apricots, cantaloupe, oranges, mangoes, peaches, carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, yellow and orange peppers, and pumpkin.

GREEN: asparagus, spinach, broccoli, cabbage, green beans, grapes, and kiwi.

PURPLE: blackberries, blueberries, grapes, plums, prunes, and raisins.

Fats:

Not the typical substance you would expect for healthy hair, but it's true, certain fats are extremely beneficial for the health of your hair. Increasing unsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids can increase the shine, length, and bounce that you've always wanted. To get these good fats try eating avocados, nuts, fish, and flax seeds, and walnuts.

The Top 10 Foods For Your Hair₃:

- Food 1:** Salmon – It is a high protein, high iron, high Vitamin B₁₂, and high omega-3 fatty acid punch that can fight dry and unhealthy hair. Vegetarians eat flaxseed for some of the same benefits.
- Food 2:** Dark Green Vegetables – These are usually high in iron, calcium, Vitamin A, and Vitamin C, the latter two of which can help create sebum, the hair's natural conditioner.
- Food 3:** Beans – Provides large amounts of biotin, protein, iron, and zinc.
- Food 4:** Nuts - For thick, shiny hair, nuts is the way to go. They contain selenium which is good for your scalp. Walnuts contain omega-3 fatty acids, and other nuts such as cashews, pecans, and almonds can prevent shedding by having a large amount of zinc.
- Food 5:** Lean Meats – Poultry and high protein lean meats can give you stronger hair as hair is made out of keratin, a protein.
- Food 6:** Eggs – They contain a good source of protein as well as Vitamin B₁₂ and biotin.
- Food 7:** Whole Grains – Most cereals and snacks contain a good source of iron, B vitamins, and zinc which all can help your hair grow thicker and longer.
- Food 8:** Oysters, Lamb, or Beef – These contain large amounts of zinc.
- Food 9:** Low-fat dairy products – They contain calcium which is also beneficial for hair growth and in addition whey/casein, two high-protein sources.
- Food 10:** Carrots – Not only rich in Vitamin A for your eyes, but also for your scalp. This can help you get shiny hair.

Non-Food Related Tips for Your Hair:

Since long, healthy hair needs healthy hair to begin with, remove the damaged hair down to where the hair is smooth and healthy. Although healthy hair does not need to be trimmed as often as damaged hair, you should trim your hair often using effective tools. Working with the wrong set of instruments could end up in actually more split-ends than before. If your hair begins to show damage, trim once again, eat better, and use the following tips in order to get your hair healthier inch-by-inch.



- Tip 1:** Avoid Daily Use of Heated Appliances – the blow dryer, curling iron, etc. I know that it is impossible to stop using these appliances especially when going out clubbing or going out to a nice restaurant but it is absolutely a cause of damaged hair. Try to cut down as much as possible.
- Tip 2:** Don't use chemicals daily in your hair or even for long-time use. Perms and peroxide are deadly, literally, to your hair and the addition of these results in unavoidable damage. If you must color, make sure the peroxide use is minimal and use color-related shampoos and conditioners to try to keep your hair healthy while it is colored.
- Tip 3:** While your hair is rejuvenating, avoid the beach or pool. The chlorine or salt found in the pool or the beach can damage your hair. If you need to swim, use specifically-formulated shampoo that removes the chlorine or just buy a long-hair swim cap.
- Tip 4:** Avoid rough usage of your hair. Never braid too thin, straighten too often, or when wet, wipe your hair with aggression. Before shampooing, remove knots in your hair and then use a boar bristle brush to remove loose hairs.
- Tip 5:** If you wash your hair often do not use the shampoo every time. You can use the conditioner to wash away surface contaminants but the harsh chemicals found in shampoo should only be used occasionally during the week.
- Tip 6:** Try invigorating your hair by rinsing it in cold water. Do not expose your body to it for a long period of time but a cold shower can improve the health of your hair and give you a refreshed feeling away from the heat outside.
- Tip 7:** Take 1 to 3 250 mg capsules of borage oil, evening primrose, or flaxseed oil 1 to 3 times per day because of their richness in omega-3 fatty acid.
- Tip 8:** Wrap wet hair gently in a towel to allow for some soaking before you rub your hair and create split ends.

Tip 9: Get dressed and put your makeup on before styling your hair. Hair is susceptible to most damage when wet.

Tip 10: Use a humidifier at night. Often it can get really dry, and this dry environment can prevent your hair from remaining soft and shiny.

Closing Remarks:

Basically, eat more cereal in the morning because of the large amounts of vitamins, minerals, and milk you consume in the morning, all of which promote healthy hair. Eat more nuts for snacks throughout the day, an assorted variety (don't eat TOO MUCH because they ARE high in fat) and for dinner eat more green vegetables, beans, and lean meats – fish is good for the non-vegetarian. In addition to these, reduce your stress levels, reduce the stresses your hair faces, and avoid dramatic weight shifts. Fasting or bingeing can result in unhealthy hair and so can weight cycling. So watch your whole body's health, and the health of your hair will follow.



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