

Wellness and Hair Growth in Women

Age 20-60: A Mini Review

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Abstract: Wellness embraces the motivation of a person to achieve a perfect balance in each component of one's life, even their hair. It is the purposeful choice to maintain a lifestyle worthy of enchainning optimal balance of physical mental and spiritual health. As such, a "well" woman is all-rounded and focuses on each aspect of her life such as her diet, hair growth and care. To enable hair growth, nutrition, age, and lifestyle choices are to be examined. Solutions to maximize on hair growth include diets that include moderate amounts of each essential nutrients, treatment of protein supplements and simple hair care practices.

Keywords: Wellness, hair growth, women, lifestyle, personal responsibility, nutrition.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Samson was really unto something. As superficial as it sounds, there's no denying the fact: Hair is a tremendous source of strength, self-esteem and sex appeal. Hair is usually the very first feature other people notice, it's the ultimate beauty barometer which clearly broadcasts a woman's personality, sense of style, even her age and social status" [1]. However, can a woman's hair really shine if she's not well? Can a woman's wellness be linked to her hair growth? The purpose of this review is to determine the link between wellness and hair growth in women aged 20-60.

Wellness can be defined as purposeful, enjoyable living or more specifically, a deliberate lifestyle choice characterized by personal responsibility and optimal enhancement of physical, mental and spiritual health [2]. Wellness embraces the motivation of a person to achieve a perfect balance in each component of one's life, even their hair. Hair growth can be viewed as the consistent stimulation (through various avenues) of the hair shaft which consequently promotes the growth of the hair follicle. The findings of this review article, gathered from previous researches, will be used to inform women of how important their state of wellness is to their hair growth and possible measures can be actualized to minimize/eliminate hair loss (alopecia) and achieve hair growth success.

2. RELEVANT LITERATURE

When someone's entire lifestyle is based on health-enhancing behaviors, they are in full high gear into achieving total wellness [2]. Shining and healthy hair is the attribute of healthy people looking after themselves and taking good care of their body, but for women they are also a decoration which gives them sense of wellbeing. Therefore, it is wise of persons, especially females, to take into consideration the significant fact that the ingredients of diet (contained in various groups of consumed food products) have direct impact on structure, maintenance and growth of hair [3].

NUTRITION:

According to Goluch-Koniuszy, nutrition plays an important part on how our hair looks over time. Nutrition is the science devoted to the study of dietary needs for food and the effects of food on organisms [2]. Several nutritional intake promotes hair growth in women. When studying nutrition, an exploration of the essential nutrients is crucial as they either function to provide energy, promote growth, development and maintenance and/or ensure smooth running of body functions [4]. As each nutrient tremendously aids in the hair growth process, nutritional deficiencies are also a known cause of hair loss and may include inadequate intake of proteins, minerals, essential fatty acids, vitamins and water.

Dietary zinc, iron and selenium deficiency may be also a cause of alopecia (hair loss) [5]. In addition, benefits of drinking hot water involves the enhancement of overall hair health and vitality; as it promotes hair growth and prevents dandruff [6].

AGE:

Human hair primarily plays a role in social and sexual communication, with major hair growth pattern differences from childhood, through puberty until adulthood [7]. The mean age women undergo menopause is fifty-one (51) years [8]. Depending on various factors, the number and density of women hair might change not only during illness but also in physiological conditions, among others in the period of menopause. Hence, it is important for women all ages to consider their health as it promotes hair growth and maintenance of that growth. The hormonal changes of menopause lead to decreased hair diameter, growth rate and percentage anagen. Hair density is affected by chronological age. The compounded effect of these changes may lead to a heightened perception of decreased scalp coverage in middle-aged women. Menopausal status significantly influences hair growth rate [8]. Additionally, androgens, a male sex hormone found in both genders that decreases with time, are implicated in causing scalp hair thinning in women, but women with androgen-deficiency who are treated with testosterone obtain improved scalp hair growth [9]. It is now well established that systemically and locally produced androgens profoundly affect the physiological growth of scalp and body hair [10].

LIFE STYLE CHOICES:

Health incorporates physical, mental and social well-being. A well woman challenges herself to groom and cherish both her hair and body as she is enriched with a sense of wellbeing. However, weak and falling out hair might extremely lower the comfort of women's life, lead to lowering of self-esteem and stress which is bound to this may even intensify the problem [3]. With this in mind, the day to day or habitual activities of a women does impact her hair growth. The differences in hair care practices and hair conceptions among women may contribute to clinically observed variation in hair fragility and growth. Hair care practices include frequency of hair wash, trimming, the use of hair color, frequency of hair color use, chemical curling agents, handheld blow dryers, and the various materials used for the different (preferred) types of styling. A recent study by Bryant et al. showed that individuals with simple hair care practices (gentle combing, fewer products, fewer appliances, and infrequent or no use of chemical relaxers) had lower rates of hair breakage [11]. Also, unhealthy lifestyle habits affects health like smoking and drinking and ultimately, the process of hair growth.

CAUSES OF HAIR LOSS:

Almost everyone experiences hair loss when the hair is being washed or combed, hence hair loss is a natural path of one's hair life process. However, the amount of hair being loss is the central phenomena, which can pose a problem for various individuals. The "pull test" is often used to assess ongoing hair loss. If more than 10% of hairs are pulled away from the scalp, the test is positive, suggesting active hair shedding [12]. According to Ablon (2012) some common causes of hair loss in women include medical conditions, such as hypothyroidism; medications including oral contraceptives; nutritional deficiencies; and physiological and emotional stresses. Common prescribed drugs can also ensue hair loss, including nonsteroidal and anti-inflammatory drugs [12]. Among 100 adult women with diffuse hair loss in one study, probable causes were determined to be psychological stress (30%), fever (33%), abortion and delivery (21%), trauma or surgical operations (13%), and hypothyroidism (10%). More than 50 percent of women had more than one likely cause of hair loss while a cause could not be determined for six percent [13]. Additionally, a family history of androgenic alopecia can point to a genetic cause [12]. Severe hair loss is a problem for many women - some more than others - and with hair loss comes the problem of hair growth.

SOLUTION:

To grow and maintain hair growth, women are advised to eat moderately from each category of essential nutrients, i.e. fish, meat, cottage cheese, brown rice etc. for protein, full grain bread, rice, vegetables etc. for carbohydrates, poultry, eggs, olive oil etc. for fats, animal products, pasticcio nuts, walnuts, cabbages, dairy products, green leafy vegetables for minerals and/or vitamins [3]. Natural products, such as biotin and zinc, have also been advocated for the treatment of hair loss [13]. Furthermore, *Viviscal Extra Strength* is an oral marine protein supplement (MPS) specifically designed to promote hair growth in women suffering from temporary thinning hair. MPS continues to demonstrate an excellent safety profile [13]. It is also important for women to consider their hair care practices and the simpler approaches is recommended (gentle combing, fewer products, fewer appliances, and infrequent or no use of chemical relaxer).

3. CONCLUSION

Doubtlessly, a woman's wellness can impact the quality and quantity of her hair. Shining and healthy hair is the attribute of healthy people looking after themselves and taking good care of their body, but for women they are also a decoration which gives them sense of wellbeing. In caring for one's hair; nutrition, age and lifestyle choices are to be considered to stimulate and maintain hair growth. Wellness represents a holistic and optimal enhancements of every aspect of one's life, and for the focus to be on hair, wellness and hair growth will center on both the external (like hair practices) and internal (nutrition or diet).

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