



Having Healthy Hair

The health of hair is a very important factor for its growth and maintenance. It is important to remember natural is always best; and many times what is good for us is found in our fruits and vegetables instead of in a bottle full of more chemicals.

Vitamins are essential for the whole body including the health of our hair and do the following:

Vitamin A – Produces healthy sebum in the scalp

Vitamin B5 – Prevents graying and hair loss

Vitamin B6 – Produces keratin (the strong protein found in hair and skin) and prevents hair loss

Vitamin C – Important for growth and maintaining healthy hair

Vitamin E – Enhances scalp circulation

Iron – Helps reduce hair loss

When shopping for products we must know what to avoid as they can work against the hair.

Chemicals to avoid are:

- **Sodium Lauryl/Laureth Sulfate (SLS)** - A detergent in shampoos. Used for the cleansing properties and foaming. This detergent is responsible for stripping hair of natural oils.
- **Parabens** (Methyl, Propyl, Butyl and Ethyl) - Parabens are usually used as preservatives in shampoos, conditioners etc. used to extend shelf.
- **Lanolin Petroleum and mineral oil** – cheap ingredients used in greases for black hair. But have no real benefit for moisturising the hair. These ingredients usually weigh down the hair and stop the hair shaft absorbing from the natural oils produced by the scalp.
- **Propylene Glycol** – is a humectant and in some instances is treated as a toxic chemical. Found in many body care products is used in airplane anti-freeze and brake fluid. Propylene glycol is found to cause allergic reactions, dermatitis, dry skin and eczema.
- **Formaldehyde** – This cheap preservative is used in hair care products containing water to prevent bacteria growth. Suspected carcinogen and could cause skin irritations, trigger heart palpitations, leads to joint pain, allergies, headaches, chest pain, ear infections and dizziness. Cosmetic manufacturers do not have to list the chemical in products they produce.

What really is needed by our hair is not to be found in fancy packaging promoted by a well marketed ad campaign. Instead it is the humble ingredients needed of nature which we overlook all the time but have the best results.



- **Shea butter** – natural fat extract from Karite tree found in West Africa. Conditioning properties in shea butter restores moisture to dry brittle hair, prevents breakage and split ends whilst promoting healthy hair growth.
- **Aloe** – Is a great way to maintain healthy moisture balance of the hair.
- **Vitamin E** – This oil comes from vegetables and is used in hair and body products to prevent other oils turning rancid. It is used for its great moisturising properties.
- **Jojoba oil** – Extracted from seeds from desert shrub simondsia chinesis. The oil closely resembles the natural sebum produced by the scalp and is used to restores shine without causing product build up. As well as Jojoba oil, coconut, sunflower, sweet almond oils are great all-moisturising agents.
- **Wheat protein** – A highly refined natural protein from whole wheat used to improves body for dry hair.
- **Glycerin** – derived from palm oil is a natural humectants and conditioning agent helps hair attract and retain moisture. This ingredient is easily absorbed by hair shaft.
- **Panthenol or Pro vitamin B** – is used in hair care products to improve manageability and replenish moisture. The Vitamin B complex is said to increase hair strength and thickness.

References

Chris- Tia E Donaldson, Thank God I'm Natural: The ultimate guide to caring for and maintaining natural hair
Mireille Liong-A-Kong, 2004. Going Natural – How to fall in love with nappy hair.