



Product of the Month

Polygonum 14

Assists with hair loss, premature gray hair, brittle and unhealthy hair, split ends and dry scalp by increasing blood circulation and providing essential nutrients for hair growth.

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22635 NE Marketplace Dr.
Suite #130
Redmond, WA 98053

(425) 949-5961

HAIR LOSS

Why hair loss occurs and what you can do about it

By Dr. Brooke Azie-Rentz

Both men and women suffer from hair loss throughout their lives, with some experiencing it as early as puberty. Most people shed about 50-100 hairs per day, but because we have over 100,000 hairs on our head, this is usually not noticeable.

Men start to notice thinning with a receding hair line or some bare patches around the crown of the head. Women on the other hand rarely get a receding hair line -- their hair loss appears as a wider part on the scalp or with thinner ponytails.

Here is a list of causes of hair loss:

- **Stress** - This can be both physical (i.e. dramatic weight loss or injury) or emotional (i.e. death in the family.) Hair loss from a stressful event can appear up to three months after the event.
- **Vitamin Imbalance** - High vitamin A, low iron, low B vitamins and low zinc levels have all been shown to promote hair loss.
- **Food** - Vegetarians and vegans tend to be low in protein, which is needed to produce hair, as well as vitamins such as iron.
- **Eating disorders** such as anorexia and bulimia tend to cause deficiencies in vitamins and minerals and also can be a stress on the body, all contributing to hair loss.
- **Sex hormones** - Pregnancy, menopause, andropause and PCOS are all “disorders” that alter the ratios of estrogen, progesterone and testosterone in our bodies. Low levels of estrogen and high levels of testosterone are both associated with hair loss in women. In men, testosterone converting to DHT (dihydrotestosterone— an inactive form of testosterone) is usually the culprit.
- **Genetics**- sometimes you just can’t help it! Male pattern baldness effects about 66 percent of men by age 60 and many women are afflicted by androgenic alopecia; both disorders are passed down to you by mom and dad.
- **Chronic disease and infections**- Hyper and hypo thyroid disorders and autoimmune diseases like lupus are known to cause hair loss as well as other infections, like ringworm.
- **Medications** - The list is long but here are a few known culprits: beta blockers, methotrexate, some NSAIDs, anabolic steroids, anti-depressants and psychiatric medications.
- **Over styling** - Too much blow drying, curling, straightening, hot oil treatments and styles such as corn rows, braids, tight pony tails and weaves.
- **Trichotillomania** - Absolutely one of my favorite medical words! This is an impulse control disorder that causes people to pull their hair out.
- **Age** - Yup....it happens!

So now that we have discussed what causes our hair to fall out, what we can do to try and hold on? Obviously here at AIM we would want to address the cause here, so we would make sure you weren't over-styling your hair and reminding you to wash less often -- when you do to make sure you use conditioner every time and let your hair air dry as often as possible...

For the rest of Dr. Brooke's article, visit aim4healthblog.com.

The TCM Approach to Hair:

How the kidney and other organs effect graying and thinning

By Nichole Santoro

The Traditional Chinese Medicine concept of the kidney system is broad and profound. When a Chinese medical practitioner talks about Kidney Qi, it is meant to include the physiological functions of the kidney-urinary and endocrine system, which is hugely responsible for a person's basic health and sense of well-being. The kidney and urinary bladder system, besides performing their more obvious functions of secreting urine and waste products from the body, also dictate metabolism, mineral and electrolyte balance. These core functions of the human body are the basis of our health and that is why the kidney is described the "root of yin and yang" in Chinese Medicine. The balance of our hormones, electrolytes, minerals and fluids is the basis of homeostasis in our bodies.

The acute observation skills of ancient Chinese doctors discovered that internal organs are manifested by external features of the human body. This is how we determine how healthy an organ is. The kidney system is noted to have the following spheres of influence:

1. Governs growth and maturation
2. Produce skill and willpower
3. Governs the bones and teeth
4. Open into the ears and effects hearing
5. Manifest in the head hair

This month we focus on the Kidney Qi in its relation to the hair on the head. When the organ is healthy and its Qi abundant (all functions kidney system are in balance and optimal) the hair will be abundant, radiant and lustrous. When Kidney Qi declines, the hair loses its pigmentation, withers and falls off. This is an inevitable process of aging.

Graying Hair

Hair pigmentation receives its color from different amounts of melanin pigments in the outer layer of the hair. The formation of melanin is regulated by the endocrine system, especially the adrenals. With a balanced secretion of cortisol from the adrenals, melanocyte stimulating hormone (MSH) is secreted, which regulates hair and skin coloring.

Individuals with a deficiency of kidney yin and essence, or a lack of adrenalcortical hormones, will result in a loss of hair pigmentation or graying. Kidney yin is best nourished by getting quality sleep, meditation, reducing stress and striking a good balance between work and play.

There are also several Chinese Herbs that help restore strength and balance of the kidney Qi. The most well-known and researched is called, **He Shou Wu** (*Polygonum multiflorum*). It is classified as blood tonic which nourishes the liver and kidney essence.

Thinning Hair

Each hair follicle is nourished by a loop of blood vessels and supported by small bundles of enervated muscles. A lack of good blood supply will diminish the body's ability to send nutrients to the head, resulting in hair loss. The best results for treating alopecia or hair loss is to encourage growth with herbs that stimulate the scalp and hair bed. Alcohol extracts, tinctures and oils are made using circulatory herbs and are rubbed vigorously into the scalp. If possible, one can follow this with a light tapping over the affected areas of the scalp with a Chinese dermal hammer. Treatment should be applied regularly and daily for anywhere from a few weeks to months according to the severity of the condition. Many who have been consistent in their attempts, have stimulated new hair growth. This has been well documented by many cases in both Western and Asian countries.

Diagnosing and Treating

Diagnosing and treating premature hair loss or graying with Chinese medicine, leads one to use herbs and formulas that are indicated for the whole person. By treating hair symptoms, one eventually also finds that their energy and well being improves, joint pains disappear and is beneficial even to one's sex life. In this way one herb or formula can treat 100's of symptoms at the same time.