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The latest information about hair loss and treatment.

In the News...

A recent hair loss survey illustrated some of the misconcenptions about hair loss. The survey, conducted in November 2009, showed that a large number of respondents believed hair loss was due to over-styling or wearing a cap - neither of which is a true cause of hair loss. For more information about the survey findings, http://www.stophairlossnow.co.uk/News/Most-think-stress-hair-loss-cause-101104.html.

For Your Information...Vitamins and Hair

A quality multi vitamin which is gender and age specific is always a good idea – but can be essential for those wishing to slow hair loss. Be careful though – you can have too much of a good thing. Excess of certain vitamins can lead to hair loss. Most people are familiar with the RDA of vitamins, or recommended dietary allowance. This system of suggestion adequate intake of vitamins and minerals has been in use since 1941. It is regularly updated and in 1997 underwent an overhaul by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences with the creation of the Dietary References Intake (DRI). The DRI provides suggested vitamin and mineral intake for males and females dependent on age and pregnancy status.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A helps to protect hair follicles from damage by free radicals. A diet low in vitamin A can lead to dry hair. Alternately though, a diet high in vitamin A can lead to hair loss.

The recommended daily intake of vitamin A is 900 µg/d for adult males, 700 µg/d for adult females, 770 µg/d for pregnant adult females, and 1,300 µg/d for lactating adult females. Vitamin A is a fat soluble vitamin meaning that excess intake will be stored in a person's body fat and will not be excreted in the urine. Vitamin A can be derived from liver, dairy products, fish, darkly colored fruits, and leafy vegetables. Beta-carotene can turn into a form of vitamin A. Beta-carotene can be found in carrots, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, winter squashes, cantaloupe, pink grapefruit, apricots, broccoli, spinach, and most dark green, leafy vegetables.

B-complex Vitamins

B-complex vitamins include thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pyridoxine, cobalmin, biotin, pantothenic acid, and folate. It is believed that the B-complex vitamins contribute to the nourishment of the hair follicle. Deficiencies have been associated with neurologic problems and anemia. B-complex vitamins should be taken as a balanced supplement of all of the vitamins. Natural sources include fortified cereals, organ meats, fortified soy-based meat substitutes, fish, poultry, meat, and some whole grain products. Adequate pantothenic acid intake should be 5mg/d for adult males and females, 6 mg/d for pregnant adult females, and 7 mg/d for lactating adult females. Riboflavin (B2) intake should be 1.3 mg/d for adult males, 1.1 mg/d for adult females, 1.4 mg/d for pregnant adult females, and 1.6 mg/d for lactating adult females. Thiamin (B1) intake should be 1.2 mg/d for adult males, 1.1 mg/d for adult females, 1.4 mg/d for pregnant adult females, and 1.4 mg/d for lactating adult females. Pyridoxine (B6) intake should be 1.3 mg/d for males ages 14-50 and 1.7 mg/ for adult males over 50, 1.3 mg/d for females 19-50 and 1.5 mg/d for females over 50, 1.9 mg/d for pregnant adult females, and 2.0 mg/d for lactating adult females. Finally, cobalamin (B12) should be taken as 2.4 µg/d for adult males, 2.4 µg/d for adult females, 2.6 µg/d for pregnant adult females, and 2.8 µg/d for lactating adult females.

Additional information is available about folate and biotin. Biotin, also referred to as vitamin H or B7, is a water soluble part of the B-complex of vitamins. It is required for cell growth, the production of fatty acids, and the metabolism of amino acids. In a 2000 study, researchers from Harvard University suggest biotin is one of the most important nutrients for preserving hair strength, texture and function. It is found in beans, bread, fish, and legumes. Deficiency is rare but can result in hair loss including eyebrows and eyelashes. Adequate intake of biotin is 30 µg/d adult males, 30 µg/d for adult females, 30 µg/d for pregnant adult females, and 35 µg/d for lactating adult females. Excessive consumption of raw eggs, which contain the protein avidin, can result in biotin deficiency as avidin binds biotin and makes it unavailable to the body.

Folic acid is very important for cell division and multiplication in the body. Signs of folic acid deficiency include anemia, increased fatigue, and graying of hair. Certain medications, especially methotrexate, can lead to folic acid deficiency. There is also good evidence to show a decrease in people exposed to ultraviolet radiation, the same radiation seen in tanning beds and sun exposure. Folate consumption should be 400 µg/d for adult males and females, 400 µg/d for pregnant adult females, and 500 µg/d for lactating adult females. Women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant should consult with their doctor as birth defects have resulted from folic acid deficiency and additional intake may be necessary.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C helps to protect cells from damage as a strong antioxidant and is an important part of the pathway which produces collagen, a major component of the connective tissue of the skin and hair follicle. Vitamin C can be obtained from citrus fruits, tomatoes, tomato juice, potatoes, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, strawberries, cabbage, and spinach. The recommended daily intake of vitamin C is 90 mg/d for adult males, 75 mg/d for adult females, 85 mg/d for pregnant adult females, and 120 mg/d for lactating adult females.

Deficiency of vitamin C is rare in industrialized countries but manifests as the disease scurvy

which was common in the fairly recent past. The disease results from improper collagen formation and manifests in the scalp as bleeding at the base of hair and a distinctive corkscrew hair.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E is actually a series of eight fat soluble vitamins, called tocopherols and tocotrienols, that have antioxidant properties. Vitamin E works with selenium to prevent oxidative damage to cell walls. The body preferentially uptakes alpha-tocopherol. Vitamin E can be found in wheat germ, corn, nuts, seeds, olives, spinach and other green leafy vegetables, asparagus, and vegetable oils (corn, sunflower, soybean, and cottonseed). The daily recommended intake of vitamin E is 15 mg/d for an adult male, 15 mg/d for an adult female, 15 mg/d for a pregnant adult female, and 19 mg/d for a lactating adult female. Based on studies, the American Heart Association in 2004 stated that taking more than 400 IU per day of vitamin E can increase the risk of death due to various reasons.

For More Information...

For more information about hair loss and treatments, consider reading Dr. Verret's book - *The Patient Guide to Hair Loss & Hair Restoration* available at Barnes&Noble.com and Amazon.com.

For questions or to suggest content, send an e-mail to info@newsletter.innovationsfps.com