

Role of Diet and Lifestyle in Management of Alopecia

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Abstract:

Hair is the most important cosmetic addition to our appearance. Since healthy hair is a sign of a healthy body, it is important for us to keep our hair silky, shiny and thick. In medical term, Alopecia is an autoimmune disease that leads to patchy hair loss. alopecia is the most prevalent autoimmune disorders hair loss disorders after androgenetic alopecia. acute illness, high stress, and thyroid imbalance, certain drugs, sudden weight loss and high fever, hormonal, nutritional deficiencies like health-related cause and changing lifestyle are play major role for hair problems. The first step is root cause in your diet or lifestyle that may be increasing the hair loss. This review on the basis role of diet and lifestyle in management of alopecia.

Keywords: Hair, alopecia, lifestyle, diet, Hair loss.

Introduction:

Hair disorders can be mainly divided into Loss of hair (alopecia) or excess hair (hirsutism). Alopecia areata is a common clinically heterogenous, immune mediated, nonscarring hair loss disorders. Hair is a protein filament that grows from follicles found in the dermis. The living parts of hair-hair follicle, hair

root, root sheath and sebaceous gland; are beneath the skin, while the actual hair shaft which emerges i.e. the cuticle (which covers the cortex and medulla) has no living processes. No biological process can repair damages or changes made to the visible hair shaft, though much can be done to maintain hair and ensure that the cuticle remains intact. Care of the hair and care of the scalp skin may appear separate but are actually related as hair grows from beneath the skin.

Genetics and health are factors in healthy hair. The speed of hair growth varies upon genetics, gender, age, hormones and may be reduced by nutrient deficiency (i.e. anorexia, anaemia, zinc deficiency) and hormonal fluctuations (i.e. menopause, polycystic ovaries, thyroid disease)².

Ayurveda has been emphasizing more on the importance of diet and lifestyle in the maintenance of health. According to Ayurvedic principle, excess of *Pitta dosha* in the body is increased by hot climatic conditions, excessive intake of spicy, salty and sour food, hot and sharp food, tea, coffee, alcohol, meats and excessive smoking. Eating too much fried, oily, greasy, and acidic foods also aggravates Pitta.

Hair is derived either as a by-product or produced as a breakdown product of *Asthi* (bone tissue). Any disturbance in this tissue metabolism, which very much depends on the digestive fire, can affect the health of the hair. To a certain extent, the quality of hair depends on the body constitution. Balancing of *pitta dosha* and improves the quality of *asthidhatu* are effective in treating hair fall.

Hormone related hair fall may also result from an increased sensitivity of hair follicles to male hormones or due to greater number of male hormone receptors attached to hair follicles. This is the component that is inherited through the genes termed as Pitta constitution.

Causes of Hair Loss:

Hair is nourished by the nutrient plasma, which is produced by the metabolic processing of the food we consume. The healthy nutrient plasma is responsible for the nourishment of the hair. According to Ayurveda, excess of *pitta dosha* (heat) in the body is the chief cause of hair problems. There are various other reasons for hair loss as mentioned below:

1. Hormonal imbalance in men and women is an important cause of hair loss. In men, a high concentration of dihydrotestosterone (DHT) in hair follicles causes hair fall. In women, hormonal imbalances both during pregnancy and after delivery cause hair fall.
2. High amount of sebum in the scalp clogs the pores of the scalp and prevents nutrients from reaching the hair follicle, resulting in hair loss.
3. Inadequate nutrition or unhealthy diet also causes hair fall.
4. Stress, worry, lack of sleep, and anxiety too cause hair fall.
5. Long-standing diseases like typhoid, viral infections, anaemia, surgery,

etc. cause general debility which leads to hair fall.

6. Some medicines like birth-control pills, anti-depressants, etc., including those used for gout, during chemotherapy against cancer, etc. cause hair fall.
7. Diseases like lupus and diabetes also cause hair fall.
8. Tying hair tightly pulls the hair from the follicles and cause traction alopecia.
9. Heredity is also responsible for hair fall.
10. Dandruff or fungal infection of scalp causes hair fall.
11. Accumulation of dirt on scalp causes blocking of pores and weakens hair roots. This leads to hair fall.

Methodology

Compilation and tabulation of information in various ayurvedic literature (ayurvedic classical texts) related with eating disorders are included and even the information from different sources like journals, articles, internet and other books are also included. The data so collected is then analysed.

Treatment

A high protein and an iron rich diet is recommended for hair loss. An adequate intake of raw vegetables, fresh fruits, salads, green leafy vegetables should be included in the diet on a regular basis. – Use a natural shampoo to clean the hair. *Amla* (*embilica officinalis*), *Shikakai* (*Acacia concinna*) are very good for washing the hair. – Oiling and massaging of scalp is very beneficial for stopping the hair loss. Use coconut oil at least three times in a week. Certain medicated oils like *Neelibhringadi* oil, *Kunthalakanthi* oil, *Kanjunyadi* oil are very useful. Put oil on the scalp, and massage gently in the roots of the hair.

The person should maintain a regular bowel movement every day. In case of constipation, a mild natural laxative can be taken. *Triphala* is very useful. Regular physical exercise is very beneficial as it helps in balancing the aggravated *doshas*. Rub your scalp after washing the hair. It increases the blood circulation and activates the sebaceous glands. A mixture of lettuce and spinach juice is good to drink to induce hair growth. The juice of carrot, and lettuce juice is also good to take. Washing the hair with a paste of cooked green gram and fenugreek (*methi*) two to three times a week. The seeds of fenugreek are soaked in coconut oil and kept under direct sunrays for seven days and applied to the scalp, which prevents hair loss. Traditional therapies like *Dhara*, *Abhyangam*, *Thala pothichil*, *Nasya* shows excellent effects.

The first step is to locate the root cause in your diet or lifestyle that is causing the *pitta* dosha. Once you locate it, try to give up or at least reduce the diet, habit or activity responsible for increasing *pitta*.

1. Always use a natural shampoo or soap (without too many chemicals) to clean the hair.
2. Oiling and massaging of the scalp is highly beneficial in preventing hair loss. Use coconut oil or mustard oil at least three times in a week. Certain medicated oils like *Mahabhringraj* oil, *Amla* oil, and *Arnica* oil are also very useful.
3. Ensure regular bowel movement every day. In case of constipation, a mild natural laxative may be taken. One teaspoonful of *Triphala* powder can be taken at bedtime with warm water.
4. Rub your scalp vigorously after washing the hair. It increases the blood circulation and activates the sebaceous glands.

5. A paste of the seeds of lemon and black pepper may also be applied on the bald patches.
6. Consume raw vegetables, fresh fruits, salads, and green leafy vegetables regularly.
7. Use relaxing techniques such as yoga, *pranayama*, etc. to overcome stress, anxiety and sleeplessness.
8. Avoid hairstyles which pull the hair and consequently damage it.

Diet Regimen

Ayurveda requires to maintain some simple diet regimens

Do's:

High protein diet like milk, buttermilk, soya bean, cheese, ghee, butter should be taken. Seeds, nuts and grains should also be taken on a regular basis. Seasonal fruits and vegetables should be consumed in sufficient amounts. Sprouts made from *Moong* or *Chana dal* are also recommended. In addition, taking food items that cool the body and living in a cool climate (especially in the summer) is very beneficial.

Don'ts:

Avoid pitta aggravating diet such as fried, spicy and sour foods. Excess use of yogurt, pickles, tea, coffee, alcohol and non-vegetarian foods also increases pitta. Smoking should be avoided. White flour, white sugar product should be avoided, junk foods, fast foods or foods that contain artificial colours, flavours and preservation should not be consumed regularly.

Results and Conclusion

Beautiful, lustrous and healthy hair is a result of healthy body and healthy diet. So, play important role of

diet and lifestyle in the management of alopecia.

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