

**HAIR STORY**

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# A new approach to treating hair loss

Maintaining the correct pH value of the hair and the scalp is essential for the overall health of hair. Scalp oil (sebum) has a pH balance of between 4.5 and 5.5. While the ideal pH level of your skin remains a steady 5.5, hair has two separate numbers, the ideal pH for your actual hair strands is 3.67, but for the scalp, it's 5.5.

This slightly acidic level prevents fungal and bacterial growth in hair and scalp, and keeps the cuticles closed and healthy.

Just like the skin on your face, the scalp sheds dead skin cells and it can be covered in a film of hair products and silicon from years of buildup. Scalp needs to be treated with focus on exfoliation and balancing pH.

If you have problems with excess oil, fungal or bacterial infestation, it is likely that your scalp and hair are too alkaline. Usually, this means that you are using a product that has a high pH above 7, and it is stripping away your naturally acidic sebum that fights the microbial growth.

You know what happens in the process of permanently dying or relaxing (rebonding/straightening) of hair? During the process, your hair was first treated with a highly alkaline substance to expose and change the hair's cuticle, and then, it was 'neutralised' with a highly acidic substance to flatten the cuticle again. This is a damaging process and slightly acidic hair products are needed to keep the hair cuticle lying flat.

If you have curly hair, then your cuticle is already partially open. It is especially important for people with curly hair to return their hair to a slightly acidic pH level, since the open cuticle prevents natural acidic sebum to keep the entire hair at a pH level between 4.5 and 5.5.

If you have straight hair, you should use haircare products that are pH balanced, but may not need to apply extra products, because the sebum moves through your hair, creating a natural pH balance.

Many of the hair products that people use disrupt the natural pH of the hair. A substance that is too alkaline will cause hair cuticles to open, while a substance that is too acidic will cause the cuticle to contract. Hair products can control the pH of hair.

Always wash your hair with pH balanced shampoos and conditioners. This will return your hair to a neutral rather than acidic pH level. Read labels on your current hair products. A pH between 4 to 7 works well on hair. Discontinue the use of any product outside of that pH range. Water has a pH level of 7, so it is more alkaline than your hair.

Doctor-recommended Hair Loss Treatments to make hair-friendly scalp revolve around these theories —

Balancing Scalp pH as normal scalp pH (4.5 to 5.5) changes to alkaline in oily environment.

Exfoliation of scalp which helps to get rid of the buildup of flakes and clean the oil glands out.

Use an antibacterial shampoo and moisturiser until the symptoms subside.

**READER'S TIPS**

# Hair Care

Womenfolk simply love their hair. But in a paradoxical situation, we rarely do find women who do not have any complaints concerning their hair. According to a survey conducted by a leading shampoo manufacturing company, out of 1000 women surveyed, only 7% had no problems regarding their hair. Dandruff, hair fall, premature graying, thinning hair -- and the list just goes on. Over the years, we decide to put up with it and accept the hair conundrums are there to just persist forever. But not anymore! What if I told



you there is a one-stop solution to all the hair problems out there?

Proper cleansing of the scalp is the prime step to beautiful, healthy hair. It is quite unfortunate that although detergent and sulfur loaded chemical shampoos leave our hair looking apparently silky, satin soft, and lustrous; the blended chemicals also cause alarming damage to our hair follicles and hence their over-use is detrimental to the hair's health. Besides putting the hair to chemical abuse, the chemical shampoos fall short in ensuring proper nourishment to our hair. So, here comes the DIY natural shampoo to your rescue. It is definitely going to bail you out of the purgatory your mane's rebellion has put you in.

**DIY NATURAL SHAMPOO****Ingredients**

50 grams of dried Indian gooseberry (Amla)  
 50 grams of Shikakai (Acacia concinna)  
 50 grams of soap nuts  
 1.5 liters of water



**Method**  
 Soak all the dry ingredients in the water and leave

it covered in a plastic or ceramic bowl overnight. The next day, pour the mixture in any aluminum utensil and heat to bring it to a boil. Let it simmer until the ingredients turn soft. Then cool the mixture and mash it well with your hands. Next strain the mixture and the brownish solution obtained is our shampoo. Preserve the liquid in a bottle and keep it in the refrigerator. This shampoo will remain usable for the next 9 to 10 days.

Why use it?

**Dried gooseberry (Amla):** Amla is the ultimate solution for all hair problems. It prevents and cures dandruff, too oily, dry or itchy scalp and also premature graying of hair. It is verified that amla brings down hair fall from a 100 to 2. What an amazing gift of nature it is!

**Shikakai:** We use the pods of shikakai plant in this shampoo. Saponin from the plant's pods is a foaming agent and has a long history of use as a mild cleaning agent. Shikakai cleanses without stripping the hair off its natural oils. It adds shine to the hair and leaves hair looking much softer. Shikakai also strengthens the hair roots and its anti-fungal properties reduce dandruff infection.

**Soapnuts (Reetha):** Soap nuts have been used in hair care since time immemorial. This plant too is rich in saponin, vitamins A, D, E and K which besides cleansing hair make it healthier, softer and even more lustrous with regular use. Soapnuts have a foolproof effect in taming dry and frizzy hair.

**How to use the shampoo:** Thirty minutes prior to taking a shower, dip a cotton ball into the shampoo and dab your scalp with it. This has a healing and nourishing effect on the scalp. During taking your shower, start by rinsing off the previously applied coat of shampoo. Then wash your hair using the natural shampoo in a similar manner as we use our regular ones. Repeating twice is recommended for best results. Make sure to avoid its contact with your eyes.

This home-made shampoo will not lather like the regular surfactant based shampoo but it will cleanse and nourish the hair from deep within. Since the DIY shampoo comes without any side effects, it does not have any restrictions as to how often you can use it. Use it as frequently as you wish to. This shampoo is a veritable one in all solution to the plethora of hair problems feeding off our highly treasured possession, our lovely hair. Embrace the nature in the process of reviving your hair. Your hair is going to thank you for its rejuvenation.

Here's to gorgeous, bouncy, luscious hair!

By Zarin Atiya

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