

Hair

Hair is not only good or bad but is mirror to your overall health. At some point in our lives, we all are unhappy with our hair. A person with straight hair wishes for curly ringlets and those with curly hair want stick-straight locks. People with thick and coarse hair desire it to be fine and thinner, while those with fine and thin beg for thick hair. Lucky are the people who have got healthy, thick, dense, and beautiful hair.

Structure

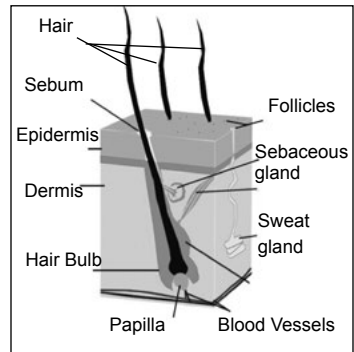
Hair is made of strong, elastic strands of protein called keratin. The roots of hair consist of very small pockets in our skin and scalp known as follicles. These follicles are found together in groups of two to five each.

Every follicle follows its own life cycle, producing about six inches of hair a year for up to four years before falling out. After a short period, the cycle starts all over again.

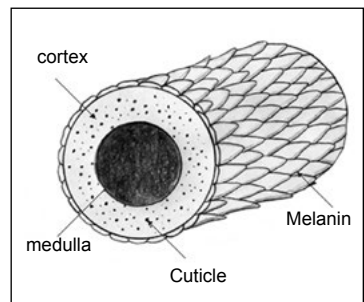
The basal tip of hair on the scalp is known as papilla, a small outgrowth of skin shaped like a doorknob, located at the tip of the follicle. The papilla contains blood vessels that supply nourishment to the hair.

Though hair strands look like singular fibres, each hair is constructed in three different layers: the cuticle, the cortex, and the medulla. When it comes to oily skin or hair, the root source is Sebum.

It is produced by sebaceous glands in the upper layers of your skin. These glands generally accompany hair follicles, aiding in the distribution of the sebum on your skin.



Hair



Structure of hair

Signs of healthy hair

Some of the most common characteristics of healthy hair are:

- Thick and dense
- Fine and silky, not too oily or rough
- Lustre-filled, with a shine and gloss
- Pliable, capable of setting and styling

Functions

Since ages, human hair is considered the epitome of beauty. However, apart from looking beautiful, hair has other functions too:

- Hair provides the most efficient means of protecting its immediate surface. The head is the closest to the radiation of the sun and experiences most of the bumps and falls of childhood to early teenage years.
- The thousands of strands of hair act as shields; prevents germs, bacteria, insects and other undesirable microbes from directly invading the scalp.
- Heat escapes easily through the head. With a full head of hair, the process of heat escape is retarded or gradually slowed down during cold winter months. Conversely, during summer, hair acts like a roof over the head and keeps it cool.

Problems

Some common hair problems are as follows:

Grey hair

For some people, grey hair is a distinguishing characteristic. For others, it is a reminder that they are getting older. Some people start to grey young, as early as their teens. This condition is called premature greying of hair.

Hair loss

The average person loses about 100 hairs each day. Losing excess hair can be a normal part of growing older, but if it falls at a very young age, then it's a problem. The most common type of hair loss in males is male pattern baldness.

Dry hair

Hair needs moisture and a certain amount of oil to keep it healthy. However, nowadays, it is 'in fashion' not to oil the hair.

Greasy hair

Sometimes sebum producing sebaceous glands work overtime and produce too much oil, leading to a condition called seborrhoea or greasy scalp.

Hair damage

Split ends and dry hair are just two of the possible outcomes of over-styling.

Dandruff

It is a common condition that causes the skin on the scalp to flake.

Causes

- Blow drying, straightening, highlighting, use of chemical dyes, and perming.
- Poor nutrition, certain medications, smoking, and certain vitamin deficiencies (particularly vitamin B12) can also turn hair prematurely grey.
- Psychological issues, hormonal imbalances, and problems related to thyroid glands.
- Menopause, PCOS, and other gynaecological disorders, as well as post-delivery.
- Use of birth control pills and medicines containing steroids
- Typhoid, Malaria, Pneumonia, chronic cold, and other such diseases.
- Psoriasis, dermatitis, and other fungal, bacterial, and viral infections.
- Acidity, constipation, indigestion, and other digestive problems
- Air pollution, excessive exposure to sunlight, regular swimming, dyes and dust particles.

