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Part-I: Introduction

1. Dandruff- An Overview

Dandruff is not a life-threatening problem, yet it often threatens your mental peace. Undoubtedly, you do not wish to be embarrassed by the white flaky dandruff powdered all over your shoulders. It is not surprising that Americans spend \$300,000,000 on anti-dandruff products each year. Dandruff affects around 50,000,000 people. You could well imagine the condition of your scalp with deposits of white flakes on them. The moment you scratch your scalp, white scales fill up your nail and leave you more vexed and frustrated.

Have you ever thought about its underlying cause? As you know, shedding of skin is a natural phenomenon. The skin of your scalp replenishes every month. The dead cells that previously formed your scalp now make up the dandruff. The presence of negligible dandruff is inevitable. The problem arises only when the presence of dead cells in the form of flakes suddenly increases uncontrollably. The removal process works at a normal pace and soon there is excess-deposits of dead cells on the scalp.

Dandruff has triggered a ton of debate amongst physicians. Many researchers believe that it results from excessive growth of the yeast *Pityrosporum Ovale* that is normally present on everyone's scalp. *Pityrosporum* constitutes the major part of skin flora. You suffer from dandruff when the normal limit of 46% of *Pityrosporum* increases up to the 74% mark. This huge increase causes inflammation and itching of the scalp. When you can put a check on this overgrowth, you can bring dandruff under control. Factors like emotional and physical stress are no less important in triggering dandruff growth.

Stress management also improves the scalp condition. There is a general tendency of dandruff growth to increase during winter compared to summer for most people.

Because of the myriad of over-the-counter products and medicated lotions, you do not need to worry about the problem of dandruff. You just need to find the remedy that works for you. It is easy to control dandruff by using some of the various remedies available. The most convenient method with mild dandruff is to wash your scalp regularly to remove the excess flakes. If you are suffering from stubborn flakes, treatment through a medicated shampoo is the answer. Dandruff is not contagious and it is not a disease!

There are many natural remedies to treat dandruff. You need to try some to see what works for you. If you have high blood pressure and you go to the doctor, he/she will start you on one kind of medication. Assuming that the first one may not be right for you, the doctor will try different brands and dosages until they find the right one for you. It is the same for dandruff, except you do not need a doctor to treat your dandruff. You do, however, need to confirm with a doctor to make sure it is dandruff that you are trying to prevent.

You can even treat dandruff by using essential oils and herbs. If you do not mind long-term treatments, you can opt for the various home remedies which some people find effective in controlling it. A mixture of coconut oil and lemon juice is equally effective as treatment with apple cider vinegar.

Natural remedies take time to show any visible results and need consistent use but are effective in addressing the cause. If you want a speedy control, shampoos containing ketaconazole are useful. Avoid using shampoos with harsh chemicals if you have a bruised scalp. Applying shampoos containing such chemicals on broken skin may cause irritation. If a particular product is

not effective for you, try another with a different ingredient base. Dandruff is not a major problem and you have scores of remedies available for you to bring it under control.

Many people use the same shampoo over and over and month after month. This can cause flaking. Even a person who does not have dandruff may find their scalp has a build up, some flaking and is becoming unbearably itchy.

You need to change your shampoo. I keep three bottles of different brands in my shower. How often you wash your hair will depend on you. I tend to like to wash my hair every other day. When I was younger, I just washed it every day. However, as I got older, I saw my hair was losing some of its bounce, and discovered that once every other day was perfect for me. You will need to test what works best for you.

In the old days, children were told to wash their hair only once a week. That is archaic. The oil builds up and the hair gets droopy and heavy. It loses its fresh scent and is generally, nowadays, considered unclean.

Even African-Americans have discovered it is okay to wash your hair more often. Oprah Winfrey mentioned that many years ago on one of her shows. Washing your hair regularly is important.

If you find that washing your hair gives you frizzy or dry ends, the **little secret** to handle that is to take some conditioner and add it to the ends of your hair before washing it normally. Then condition it after shampooing, if you are a person who likes to use conditioner.

One way to stop over-conditioning your hair and save you money is to put a little of your favorite brand of conditioner in a spritz bottle, with about 4 times

more water. After shampooing, rinse. Towel dry, then spritz the conditioner in.

Another mistake that many people make is to put gel in their hair. It's okay to put gel in your hair if that is your styling preference. However, it builds up and causes flakes, which many THINK is dandruff. So, get into the habit of washing your hair more often.

It's only the start of getting rid of dandruff. Think about it. If all that was required was just washing your hair more often, there would be no dandruff problem.

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Part-II: Dandruff Defined

2. What is Dandruff?

We really need to emphasize what dandruff is. It is not a pretty sight. I'm sure that you have seen dandruff on other people. You may notice an attractive person and there it is, the ugly white flaky dandruff on their shoulders. Without doubt, their appeal dwindles and you might start looking elsewhere.

Dandruff is a common problem. You are not alone. Never think that you are.

You know the human body is made up of cells that are replaced by new cells when the old ones die. This is a normal phenomenon and the scalp cells follow that rule.

Dandruff is the flaky dead scalp skin deposited on the uppermost layer of the scalp when new cells replace the old ones. The problem arises when the turnover of dead skin exceeds its removal process. Usually the scalp skin is replaced after every 28 days but sometimes it starts shedding quite early. This disturbs the whole cycle and you face the common problem of unmanageable dandruff.

It becomes all the more unbearable when itching and irritation accompanies dandruff. In severe cases where replacement occurs every fourth day, the scalp develops red itchy patches with sticky scales.

Do you know?

While you might think dandruff is a disease in itself, it is not. While the exact cause of dandruff is still not clear, you may treat it as a special condition of the scalp cells. The most common belief about dandruff is that it is caused by excessive dryness.

You will be surprised to know that dandruff occurs when you have an oily scalp. Another common myth related to dandruff is that it is contagious.

It is a severe skin disorder, not related to hair loss though the two may occur concurrently. So, do not fear growing bald when dandruff strikes you and, as I said before, it is not contagious.

A fungus called *Malassezia furfur* is believed to cause dandruff. While it is present on all scalps, the problem triggers when its growth crosses the normal limit. Its diet constitutes the oil secreted by hair follicles so the oily scalp acts as a rich ground for its growth. Other problems, similar in character, are psoriasis or seborrhea dermatitis but you should not confuse them with dandruff.

You should avoid scratching the affected area as it may aggravate the problem of rashes further. A break in the skin may make it more prone to staph and strep bacteria attacks.

Malassezia is a fungus attracted to oily skin. It causes itching and redness of the skin under severe conditions. Sometimes, it also occurs on the eyebrows, ears and eyelids. The natural renewal process of epidermal cells gets disturbed and it starts to grow too rapidly on the scalp. While dandruff mainly targets people between 12 and 80 years old, it also occurs in infants. It is called the cradle cap in infants and you also need to pay attention to your baby's scalp.

Cradle cap is extremely common in babies, and you need to keep their scalp clean. I put vitamin E oil on my sons' heads and cleaned them carefully and thoroughly. Dandruff seldom came back after a vitamin E treatment.

A common problem but uncommon response

It is not surprising to find that 97% of Americans suffer from dandruff at some time. One out of every two persons in the world is struck by it. Though it is not a new problem, it is worth noticing the psychological impact it has. Studies reveal that increased consciousness concerning looks is making people more worried regarding dandruff now.

Interesting research by D'Silva reveals that 28 percent of females and 32 percent of males would abstain from sharing a comb with a person having dandruff because they think that dandruff is a contagious disease. His study further revealed that men and women feel less attracted towards a person who has dandruff . Around 80 percent of them would not like to touch dandruff stricken hair.

It is true that a dandruff carrying head produces an unclean look, yet it is not related to an unhygienic lifestyle. Until the most accurate cause of dandruff is found, the best way to deal with it is to shampoo your hair regularly with an anti-dandruff shampoo.

Try to keep your head free from oiliness. Regular care is the only way to ward off dandruff to save you from embarrassment. Since dandruff is a natural phenomenon, you cannot eliminate it, only get it under control. Shampoos containing zinc pyrithione and selenium sulfides etc. are effective in controlling dandruff. Many reputable brands have anti-dandruff shampoos.

Choose the one that goes best with your skin type and gives your hair the bouncy feel that you had before you were struck by the problem of unwanted dandruff.

This book is going to give you many remedies that you can test, and we are also going to discuss the body and health from the inside too. When people have skin eruptions, oily scalps and even dry patches of skin, there is more than likely a cause that is not just skin deep but probably due to the general health of your own body.

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Part-III: Signs and Symptoms of Dandruff

3. How Do You Recognize Dandruff?

Dandruff is a common problem which you often come across. It is not difficult to recognize dandruff. In fact, you cannot ignore it once you realize that your head has become a fertile ground for dandruff. It spoils the most stylish hairstyles with its presence. Obviously, silver flakes over your dark shining hair mar its beauty altogether. Sometimes, it is accompanied by itching. While dandruff usually affects the head in extreme situations, it may also affect eyelashes, eyebrows, and the neck and nose region. Under such circumstances, dandruff further changes to seborrhea dermatitis. Seborrhea dermatitis is a situation where hyperactivity of the sebaceous glands makes the skin oily and creates an active ground for fungi to multiply.

Other related problems may indicate psoriasis or the presence of ringworm. While you think that white, oily flakes of dead skin are undoubtedly dandruff, you may be mistaken.

Some of the common problems that resemble dandruff are as follows:

- ⇒ Do you know that even your wintry dry skin can cause flaking and itching of skin? The difference is that, while the flakes caused by dryness are smaller and less oily, dandruff flakes are larger and oilier.
- ⇒ Psoriasis causes the dead skin cells to accumulate that eventually form thick silvery scales. Under severe conditions, cracks occur on the skin surface with bleeding.

- ⇒ Cradle cap is a common phenomenon among infants. This dandruff-like problem occurs in infants and is harmless. It usually clears up within a year, but vitamin E treatment has an amazing affect on children's heads. Open some E capsules with a pin (keeping the pin away from baby), then squeeze the contents on the little head and rub gently. Let it set for about five minutes, then wash away the cradle cap.
- ⇒ *Contact dermatitis* also produces itchy and red scalp. This problem crops up when you use hair products that do not suit your scalp.
- ⇒ Scalp ringworms are contagious. This fungal infection normally affects children below ten years of age. It damages the hair as well, unlike dandruff.

Sometimes, you indirectly make dandruff worse. A lot of that problem depends on your eating habits, emotional and physical state and the weather. Do you know that if your diet lacks appropriate proportions of omega 3 fatty acids or vitamin B-complex, you may be indirectly inviting dandruff?

Physical or mental stress may also cause dandruff. Use of hair-coloring chemicals, gels and spray blowers or dryers may also worsen the problem of dandruff.

Formation of dandruff is a natural phenomenon that arises from the process of renewal and removal of the dead skin cells. It becomes problematic when renewal starts to take on more rapidly than removal. The cause of this accelerated cell growth is yet unknown. Scientists believe that it may occur when population of *Pityrosporum Ovale*, a yeast found on the scalp, increases substantially.

Thus, several factors may accelerate dandruff growth on your scalp. If you wish to check this growth, try to avoid situations that may make you susceptible to dandruff. Do not confuse it with other similar problems and go for a remedy immediately after you see it. It is easier to prevent its growth in the early stages.

Common grounds for yeast build-up in your body show in many ways. You can get yeast infections in the genital areas for both men and women, and many people think that's it. It isn't. In fact, yeast can make your stomach extend and it may move to your fingernails and toenails.

If you take antibiotics, you may kill good bacteria along with the bad bacteria. You need to replace the good bacteria by adding yogurt with live *acidophilus*. You can do a lot with your diet.

Yeast lives on sugar. If you have ever seen bread rise, or beer ferment, you'll get the idea. Too much carbohydrate can cause yeast.

You can add more garlic to your diet and, yes, you can get odorless garlic pills. You should avoid mushrooms and vinegar in the diet if yeast is the problem.

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4. What is the Difference between Dandruff and Other Scalp Disorders?

You often think the ultimate cause of your flaky scalp is undoubtedly dandruff. Other diseases that manifest themselves in much the same manner but are largely different in nature include Psoriasis, Seborrhea, Seborrhea dermatitis, Rosacea and Eczema. Psoriasis is a severe skin disorder characterized by the accumulation of skin cells on the scalp and other affected parts of the body.

They form themselves into thick silvery scales. Usually it affects your trunk, knees and elbows, but when found on the scalp, it may further extend itself to the neck and forehead region. In extreme conditions, your skin may develop cracks with bleeding. It is a severe skin problem affecting about 3% of the population. While Psoriasis is not contagious, it may be hereditary.

Psoriasis appears to break out more during high stress times. My stepdaughter has Psoriasis. You rarely see it on her, but during the later stages of her pregnancies it cropped up on her elbows, buttocks and thighs. After each birth it went away on its own.

In *psoriasis*, skin cells replicate ten times faster than normal. While new cells replenish rapidly, the old cells are removed at the same speed. This results in large accumulation of live cells that form thick patches on the affected area. Psoriasis may often recur so it is harder to treat. The most effective way to treat psoriasis is to use steroid creams prescribed by a doctor. Primrose oil is also helpful in treating psoriasis. The points of difference between psoriasis and dandruff are that, while dandruff mainly affects the scalp, psoriasis can

affect other parts of the body like knees, elbows, and buttocks. The cell replication process is much faster in psoriasis than dandruff and the former is a more severe form of skin disorder that often recurs. Cases of psoriasis are more common in the Western regions of the globe than the Asian and African regions. It is quite annoying and disgusting because of its blotchy appearance.

This is again a symptom of things going wrong with the body itself. There have been some good results obtained when using olive oil in your diet, and getting more fish (omega 3). It could be (and, I'm just guessing here) that Asians tend to eat more fish than Westerners.

Seborrhea dermatitis is yet another common skin disorder and dandruff can be a part of it. It manifests itself in a variety of ways from thick scales on the scalp to red patches below the breast and redness in the armpits to redness on the face.

While you may feel that these conditions result from dryness, moisturizing these parts would further make the area redder. The word "seborrhea" means an excess of oil and, though it causes oiliness, the underlying reason that triggers it is quite different. Seborrhea causes skin inflammation and its treatment is based on fighting the same. The most apt means to combat seborrhea is by using anti-inflammatory lotions. Cortisone based lotions and creams are effective. Moisturizing the seborrhea affected region would not help in any way.

While you may think that switching to another brand of shampoos may help you in controlling seborrhea, it might not be so. The use of antiperspirant would worsen the problem so try to avoid it. Seborrhea treatment can benefit from over-the-counter products containing salicylic acid, zinc, selenium sulfide

or tar. While the yeast *Pityrosporum Ovale* does not cause seborrhea, dandruff may result from its hyperactivity.

Seborrhea dermatitis is more severe and extensive than dandruff. It may also affect the eyebrows, skin around the cheeks and nose, behind the ears and the chest. While dandruff does not interfere with hair nutrition, seborrhea may. If you do not start early treatment, it may even cause partial baldness. Seborrhea may result in accumulation of sebum (natural oil) in the ducts of the sebaceous glands. The glands can then swell up with un-discharged sebum, forming a hard mass called a white head.

Like dandruff, seasonal changes may also aggravate seborrhea. The problem worsens in winter and subsides in summer. Seborrhea may also be related to hereditary influences while it is not so with dandruff. If you are using malaria pills or lithium, the problem may worsen further. During pregnancy, the skin condition improves considerably but arises again after childbirth. This suggests that hormones also affect seborrhea condition. In mild cases, you can treat seborrhea with coal tar based shampoos. You need to consult a doctor in severe cases. The doctor may advise you on a course of steroids for its treatment.

Rosacea is also a skin disease that affects the face. It is different from dandruff. Its preliminary symptoms start with reddening of skin resembling a blush across the cheeks, nose and chin. The problem may further aggravate with emergence of pus-filled bumps and red pimples on the face. Rosacea can also trouble the eyes, causing irritation of the eyelids and its white part that may result in conjunctivitis. While the exact cause of Rosacea is yet unknown, it is observed to affect more fair-skinned people. It usually occurs between 30 to 50 years old. Men are more likely to get the infection around the nose region (Rhinophyma) while women are prone to rosacea on the chin and cheeks.

Rosacea needs patient treatment of the problem. It cannot be treated completely, though you can control it through proper medication. Rosacea fluctuates, so you have to be careful regarding its treatment. Your skin type determines a lot about the probable treatment the doctor would prescribe you. It is easier to treat pimples and bumps than the redness of the skin. Use of antibiotics is helpful in controlling it effectively. Oral antibiotic with Metrogel cream or gel is useful in combating rosacea.

Treating the skin for rosacea may take a long time and great consistency. Your skin may even need a longer time to show positive results than other people have needed. You should adopt gentle skin care for your skin and use a sunscreen with higher SPF concentration to ward off the harmful effects of sunlight. If you have rosacea-infected skin, you need to keep away from hot drinks, spicy foods, and exposure to the sun, strenuous exercises, and very hot and cold temperatures or stress.

These conditions worsen the problem further and it is better to avoid them. Rhinophyma can also be treated through surgery. The doctor removes the enlarged blood vessel through laser surgery or with a fine electric needle. You do not find flaking of the skin in rosacea as in dandruff and it is more severe and hard to treat than the latter.

Another skin disorder that resembles dandruff in a certain respect is **Eczema**. It characterizes scaling, itching and swollen rashes on the skin. An eczema-affected skin swells and shows redness. It also accompanies dry or greasy scales like dandruff.

With severe eczema, you may come across red and yellow pimples on the skin, in the ear canal, behind the ears, around the nose, on the chest and on the eyebrows. You cannot completely cure eczema but you can find ample relief

with treatment. Eczema either occurs through reaction caused by touching something which you are allergic to or people who have been suffering from asthma or hay fever.

If you developed eczema through allergic reactions to certain products, you need to minimise your contact with these. Many household items tend to cause irritation. Your skin may react to household cleansers, aftershave lotions, detergents, gasoline, turpentine, soaps and other solvents.

Eczema of the hands needs special precautions, as wetting your hands often may worsen your problem. Wearing plastic or vinyl gloves while doing work that involves water helps you protect your hands.

It is good to wear cotton gloves below the plastic ones as they soak the sweat from your hands and keep your hands dry. Occasionally wear the gloves to prevent build-up of sweat.

Excessive dryness is equally harmful, so exposing your eczema-affected hands to low humidity and cold air further worsens eczema. Wearing cotton-blend clothes soothes your eczema-affected skin while synthetic and woolen fabrics aggravate it further. Bathing with mild soaps and shampoos is useful for controlling eczema.

Anti-dandruff shampoos often contain hard chemicals, which is not good for controlling eczema. Soaking the skin for a while helps maintain the moisture balance of the skin. You can further maintain it by applying a moisturizing lotion to it. With eczema you need to restore moisture of the skin and save it from drying, but with dandruff you have to remove the excess oil from the skin to prevent flaking of the scalp.

Steroid creams, as prescribed by your doctor, work best on eczema. You may exacerbate the problem if you scratch the affected area. Scratching can result in further breaking of the skin, which may serve as a fertile ground for bacteria to cause infection.

Most people buy hand creams and use them a lot for dry skin. A little-known trick is to **moisten** the skin with clean water first, then apply the lotion.

The reason you moisten the skin with water first is that it replenishes the water that your body needs, then cover it with a cream and that will help hold real moisture in.

When you get too hot or sweaty, your skin becomes more itchy and irritated. Try to avoid brisk activities that make you perspire if you will not be able to shower immediately. Stress is thought to worsen eczema problems as well. While there is no direct proof of the co-relation between the two, there have been many studies that significantly mark stress as a strong cause of many skin problems.

It is observed that reduction in stress also improves the skin condition. Eczema is a more serious condition when compared to dandruff. You can treat dandruff with various home remedies, but treating eczema is not so easy. You have to take proper care.

Make sure the cure is suitable for **you**; otherwise it may get even worse.

B6 has been proven to help with stress. A good anti-stress B formula would be helpful with stress. I remember when my kids were small, I was more irritable than usual. My friend told me I was getting too cranky to be around. The television seemed to be too loud, and I was jumping at noises. I had heard that

over-reaction to noise was stress-related and that, to soothe the stress, I should take B vitamins, so I did. Within just a couple of days, I was back to my normal, cheerful self again.

That was years ago and I had read about it in an Adele Davis book. (She was a pioneer of natural remedies and I loved her books.) Anyway, my sister had dry patches of skin along her forehead and it was driving her crazy. I told her to take B vitamins. Later, she told me her urine had turned bright yellow, that scared her. So she made an appointment with her doctor only to find out that B vitamins make very yellow urine. So, if you use B vitamins and find dark yellow urine in your toilet, do not worry. It's normal. And, again, you can start using brewer's yeast. (Do not confuse this with baker's yeast.)

Okay, so problems like seborrhea dermatitis, rosacea, eczema and psoriasis have certain characteristics that do resemble dandruff, yet they are not exactly manifestation of the same problem. While you can treat dandruff, seborrhea and psoriasis in much the same manner, you cannot completely cure them. Or so the doctors say.

I do not know if you know this, but doctors get very little studies in nutrition in their education. They are taught how to treat symptoms and to act in emergencies. But, when it comes to prevention, most do not have a lot of knowledge.

My daughter's doctor told us there was no cure for heel spurs. I discovered the doctor was wrong. Heel spurs are caused by over growth of calcium. This in turn, makes the build up very sharp which hurts your feet and shoulders where they form. Good magnesium will melt the calcium build-up and help the calcium reach your bones instead of not being processed properly. I'm mentioning this since I'm a strong advocate of magnesium.

You need at least ½ the amount of magnesium to the amount of calcium you are using. In fact, without magnesium, calcium is not going to be used in your body.

It is good for scalp cells to replenish periodically, otherwise the scalp would grow very thick but to lose the scalp cells uncontrollably is not desirable. Seborrhea dermatitis also produces flaky scales like dandruff but the similarity ends here. It is accompanied by itching and inflammation, which is not very prominent in dandruff. Prescription medication is the best means to treat seborrhea while you can put a check on dandruff through home remedies and over-the-counter products also. Seborrhea dermatitis usually does not happen in infants.

Some unique points make it easy for you to differentiate dandruff with other skin disorders. When you see that flakiness is present only on the scalp you can safely assume that it is a typical case of dandruff.

If the scales are oily and greyish in nature, it may be because of dandruff, as scales caused by psoriasis are silvery-white with red swollen patches of skin.

Problems like eczema, rosacea and others discussed above, need medical treatment and prolonged use of the remedial measures. You cannot ignore these skin disorders, as they require proper attention. Even a severe dandruff problem demands your due attention if you wish to keep your scalp healthy and problem free.

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Part-IV: Causes of Dandruff

5. What Causes Dandruff?

The problem of dandruff is not new, but its cause has long remained an enigma for most people. While you think that your scalp suffers excessive dryness and start oiling your hair regularly, you may find the problem more aggravated.

Surely, you will feel exasperated and upset. Thanks to modern research, now you know the cause. Dandruff is not caused by any foreign element, but two microorganisms found on every human scalp. Some researchers feel the waste product produced by these microorganisms further irritates the skin of a person with increased dandruff and causes premature flaking.

This breakthrough can add a new dimension to the treatment process. Scientists feel that killing the fungus with chemicals may render a desired result. While, over the past few years, fungus *Malassezia* was linked with the problem of dandruff, the correlation is not yet established accurately. This "lipophilic" fungus feeds on oils secreted by hair follicles and produces waste products that cause skin irritation. Now, when the cause is revealed, it is easy to devise a means to treat it effectively.

Another microorganism that increases dandruff is *Pityrosporum Ovale*. It forces the premature dead skin formed on the inner skin layers to move towards the outer epidermis. Usually, it takes around a month to form new skin cells but the fungus quickens the process. Thus, the damp premature skin accumulates on the surface and thickens, causing irritation and itchiness. When

you scratch the affected area, the debris automatically falls. When you know that your oily scalp is a rich ground for dandruff causing fungi, you can shampoo your scalp more often to minimize its growth. People with oily skin and hair are more susceptible to the problem of dandruff than the one with normal skin type.

Situations that make you more prone to excessive dandruff range from physical to psychological and internal. When you eat, you hardly think it may affect your scalp. It is noticed that people who drink alcohol excessively are more prone to suffer from dandruff. Further, those enjoying lots of spicy, sugary or salty food are also susceptible to it.

Sugar intake requires B vitamins for metabolism. This makes the body deficient in B vitamins and acts as a fertile ground for dandruff growth. Even diabetics run the risk of excessive dandruff. The high-level of sugar in diabetics dehydrates the tissue and makes their skin dry, which can also cause flaky skin.

The common trend of a low fat diet may also trigger dandruff growth. Low fat diets may lack essential fats like omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids, a condition ripe for dandruff. You have to think about what you eat if you wish to protect your scalp from dandruff.

Psychological stress is also a cause of dandruff. Another cause is seasonal change. Cold dry winters aggravate the problem further. Excessive sweating, food allergies, and hormonal changes are other factors. The problem of dandruff usually starts after puberty, so hormones may also be involved in its excessive production. Parkinson's disease and suppressed immune system can also cause it.

The situation worsens when your head is exposed to harsh chemical based shampoos, UV light, and strong hair dyes. These things add up to the growth of microorganisms and cause an unhealthy scalp. An unhealthy scalp cannot support good hair growth and thus may trigger hair to fall out as well.

A close look at the dandruff flakes would reveal its exact nature. While dandruff caused by seborrhea dermatitis has greasy and yellow flakes, large silvery scales may result from psoriasis. If you go on scratching the scalp, it may cause breaks in the skin causing other bacteria like strep and staph to prosper. Habits like using tightly fitting scarves or hats and frequent use of gels and hairsprays may also add to your distress.

The *Malassezia* yeast is usually found on oily skin, so it is difficult to say what triggers the growth. While some suggest the presence of flaky skin provides a suitable condition for multiplication, others feel that the yeast causes production of flaky skin.

Since the latter seems a more probable factor, checking the growth of yeast on the skin will likely improve the condition. Shampooing the scalp regularly seems the most effective way to tame the fungal growth. Not every shampoo can combat the growth of the yeast. A shampoo containing salicylic acid or coal tar is helpful in deterring the dandruff as tar slows down production of skin cells and salicylic acid aids in removing the dead cells. Shampoos containing selenium sulfide or Pyrithione zinc also help in controlling the fungus responsible for dandruff.

A clean scalp ensures less fungal growth. You should shampoo daily. When you massage the scalp while shampooing, the dead skin is automatically removed. You should follow the instructions carefully concerning use. If you overuse the oil removing chemicals, your scalp may become too dry. That is

also not advisable. Maintain a balance to treat the problem and take care of your hair as well. You cannot afford to remove the dandruff and put your hair at stake. If you find the use of chemicals risky for your hair, you may try other alternative methods.

Dandruff can be also brought under control using herbs and supplements. Use of vitamin B6, vitamin B complex, zinc lozenges, salmon oil, kelp tablets, primrose oil etc. can render an effective cure of dandruff.

It is best to consult a physician before you take any of these supplements.

If you think that any of these alternatives will work wonders immediately, you should know that it takes time to find what will work for you. While any remedy takes time for the effects to show, you have to persist with the treatment. These are no magic solutions and it takes time to bring the desired result. Be patient and try different things. It's worth it!

You'll learn more remedies as we progress with giving you more knowledge. Knowledge is power, if you apply the knowledge that you obtain.

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6. Internal Causes of Dandruff

Dandruff can occur due to internal or external causes or both. You may think that if you maintain your scalp in good condition, you will not have any dandruff problems. Do you know that dandruff can even occur if you suffer from a hormonal disorder? Hormones are vital elements that govern various metabolic reactions and any disturbance in them can have far-reaching consequences.

Good health ensures the well-being of all body parts. If you suffer from health problems, your scalp is also likely to suffer. Poor health is one of the important factors that may cause serious dandruff. Lack of rest and emotional stress are also likely causes. A normal scalp has an orderly arrangement of removal and renewal of cells.

When this orderly state is disrupted, you face the problem of dandruff. Most of the clogging cells do not even die before they are pushed to the outer epidermis.

Dandruff is a widespread problem, affecting people in large numbers and there are hosts of internal causes that cause it. Some people may develop excessive dandruff because of allergic hypersensitiveness. High sugar intake can also trigger it. Absorption of sugar involves a large quantity of fluids that may make your body fluid deficient, ultimately causing dryness. Dryness may further facilitate flakiness of skin causing dandruff.

You have to be on your guard regarding your nutritional needs. Improper nutrition enhances the problem of dandruff. Factors like hereditary predisposition may also lead to excessive dandruff on your scalp.

While you know that dandruff is caused by the fungus *Malassezia furfur*, a combination of factors facilitates its growth. The fungus feeds on the oil present inside the hair follicles and any factors that increase the oiliness of scalp makes conditions more suitable for the fungus.

Consequently, you suffer from excessive dandruff. Try to deter its growth by checking the internal and external factors and pamper yourself with stylish, dandruff-free hair.

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7. External Causes of Dandruff

Search out the probable cause for dandruff and adopt the correct remedy for it. Like the internal causes, many external factors may also trigger excessive dandruff growth. You might never think the hairsprays and gels that bring out the curl of your hair may also cause dandruff. Your scalp is a sensitive area, which you cannot put at risk with reckless experiments. It may be sensitive to a chemical and thus produce an itchy scalp and flakiness.

If you dye your hair, try to find dyes like Clairol Herbal Essence which only take ten minutes and they have no ammonia in their formula.

Weather also affects the scalp in varied ways. Cold weather and dry indoor heating adversely affects the scalp and results in extensive dandruff growth. If you do not shampoo your hair regularly, you are likely to enhance the effects of dandruff. Rinse your hair adequately to remove the flaky dead skin from it.

Another cause of dandruff may also be the presence of clogged oil glands on the scalp. The clogged pores may result in flaking and over-drying of the skin. Keep a watch on the external factors that may lead to dandruff and discontinue the use of any product that you feel is responsible for its growth.

If you find you are also getting acne with your dandruff. You can be sure some internal changes are taking place. Adult acne for women has increased about 20 percent in the last two decades. It is being blamed on increased estrogen in women. Do you microwave your food inside plastic bags? There is much controversy on the heat of the plastic releasing estrogen. It does not hurt to stop and look around to see what you are eating and how you are preparing your food.

There are many additives to food nowadays, such as antibiotics to milk and adding calcium and "enriched vitamins." I'm a firm believer as staying as natural as possible.

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8. Dandruff- Some Myths

Many myths surround the problem of dandruff and it may be difficult to combat those myths.

Myth: Baldness and Dandruff go hand in hand. (It's never been proven!)

You often blame dandruff for your receding hairline. There is no evidence the two have any connection. The two problems may occur simultaneously but researchers are yet to find any direct relation between the two.

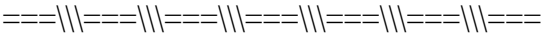
Myth: Washing your hair causes a dry itchy and flaky scalp

Myth: Blow-drying your hair keeps dandruff away

Myth: Brush your hair a lot. (Just brush your hair when it is dry or when it looks like it needs brushing.)

To find an effective method to control excessive dandruff you have to ignore these myths. They may guide you to make the wrong choices with your hair.

You might try products that do not directly help the dandruff and thus exacerbate your annoyance and embarrassment. Remember myths are harder to combat than undesirable facts.



Part-V: Treatment of Dandruff

9. What Do Doctors Recommend?

The first thing you should do when treating dandruff is to try and control its excess growth permanently and bring it back to normal limits. You may have to have the help of a doctor. You may have to add essential vitamins and minerals to your daily diet or curtail the intake of common allergens.

A common treatment your doctor could suggest might be to treat dandruff with a pro-biotic supplement. This supplement inhibits overgrowth of the fungus and gives you a healthy scalp. Fish oil and essential fatty acids from flax also helps in controlling the extensive growth of dandruff.

Remember, taking oil internally is not like putting oil on your head.

Hot and cold rinses during a shower also render good circulation. Doctors prefer to recommend gentle shampoos for your hair. Harsh, strong shampoos, even the anti-dandruff ones, should be avoided on a regular basis.

A few drops of **tea tree oil** mixed with the rinsing solution helps the solution to settle on the scalp for a while and ensures greater cleaning. Other essential oils from bergamot, rosemary, sage or thyme can also bring the desired result. Mixing these oils with coconut oil enhances their effect further. While medicated shampoos can have an adverse effect on your nervous system, the essential oil massage calms your nerves as well.

If you leave your hair wet, you invite overgrowth of dandruff. The combined effect of oil and moisture supports unchecked fungal growth. Many times you

dwell more on the remedies offered by synthetic shampoos and overlook the treasure found in natural products.

If you unravel the mystery of natural products, you come to know that treating your dandruff-affected scalp with herbs and essential oils is easy.

Your doctor may even advise you to treat your scalp with vinegar. Vinegar is useful in breaking down the scalp oil and it helps in maintaining skin pH balance. Olive oil mixed with antifungal herbs like calendula and lavender also combats the problem effectively. Dandruff can be easily brought under control if you follow the advice of your doctor early on.

Please note that while you are told in this book to wash your hair and to avoid adding oil, essential oils are different.

Try adding a teaspoon of Tea Tree Oil to your regular shampoos. It has helped many people.

Another remedy is Listerine[®] mouthwash. But any mouthwash that has an antiseptic can kill fungi growth on your head. Take a quarter cup full and rub it through your scalp. Let it sit for a few minutes, then rinse as usual.

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10. What are Home Remedies to Dandruff?

While you may have tried several anti-dandruff shampoos for a dandruff-free scalp, you might not have tried simple effective home remedies. Home remedies may offer complete solutions for controlling dandruff. They are worth trying.

The vegetables you eat can render equally good results for taming overgrowing dandruff. While you may think that drinking plenty of water may help to keep your kidneys in good condition, did you know that it is also beneficial for your hair? Similarly, use of green vegetables, fresh fruits and salads in your daily diet also helps in maintaining a healthy scalp.

You can fall victim to excessive dandruff at any age.

Wash your combs frequently and brush your hair regularly. This helps to remove the dead skin from your scalp.

The different types of food you eat are laden with essential vitamins and minerals vital for a healthy existence. While dandruff can occur due to internal or external causes, many food items contain materials that can put a check on it effectively.

One of the best ways to control dandruff is to apply a mixture of **vinegar** and water on the scalp. Make a mixture of 2 teaspoons of vinegar and 6 teaspoons of water and apply it on the scalp before you go to bed. Keep it for the whole night - tie a towel around the head. Rinse your head with vinegar water again in the morning. If you continue to treat your hair with it for few months, it will serve your purpose. You can also use a mixture of 1 teaspoon of lemon juice

and 2-teaspoons of vinegar. Massage the scalp with this solution. After the massage, treat your hair with an egg shampoo.

Some common tips

You may think that home remedies take a long time to show their effects but, if you wish to provide a permanent and effective cure, patience is must.

You can rub a combination of 1 part sulfur powder, 2 parts surgical spirit, 1 part almond oil and 4 parts rose water or distilled water on your scalp to keep dandruff at bay.

OR:

Boil a mixture of 4-5 dried thyme and two cups of water for 10 minutes. When the mixture cools down, massage it on the scalp and leave it for half an hour. Wash it afterwards and see the results. You will have a dandruff-free head and new confidence in yourself. If you love to be massaged, you can treat the problem of dandruff with it.

You can also soak ground fenugreek seeds overnight in water and massage the paste on the head, leaving it for a few minutes. Wash it afterwards using a mild shampoo.

You can also prepare a homemade mixture of 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice with 100 grams witch hazel in 200ml of water and use it on washed hair. Applying the mixture several times is helpful in warding off the problem of dandruff.

If you wash your hair with warm apple cider vinegar, leaving it for 30-40 minutes and then rinsing it with plain water, you are sure to control dandruff positively. You have to continue this process regularly to stop its return.

The smell of the vinegar does evaporate!

The best point concerning a home remedy is that you have many options and, if you think that a particular ingredient does not suit you, you can try an alternative.

While rubbing a cut onion on the scalp helps to combat dandruff, it might not suit you if you are allergic to strong smells.

If so, you have other options.

Rinse your scalp with vinegar after massaging it with three-day-old cheese. Similarly, massaging your scalp with curd also yields good results.

Treating Dandruff with Nutritional Supplements

If you feel that your problem is more internal than external, which it probably is, you can think of curing it with nutritional therapy. Changing your diet may help you rid yourself of dandruff. While a little change here and there would not have much affect your appetite, it can bring desirable changes elsewhere. Add those food items that help combat dandruff and reduce those that facilitate its growth.

This simple formula can really give you dandruff-free shining hair.

Food items like bread, wine, sweets and beer contain yeast that may encourage the growth of *Malassezia* fungus that causes dandruff. Reduce their intake and inhibit its growth.

Vitamins A and B are good for healthy hair and skin. Add food materials that are rich in these vitamins and attain a more healthy skin that can ward off the trouble-causing fungus.

Further, minerals like zinc regulate the oil glands, boost your immune system and promote healing. While many anti-dandruff shampoos contain zinc, you can eat fish and egg yolk. They are rich in this mineral. You can also supplement with a zinc tablet every day.

Other effective home remedies

Tea tree oil has served the people through its therapeutic effects for centuries. It acts as an antibiotic, antiseptic and antifungal agent and is combats dandruff as well. Be careful in using the oil as it may produce allergic reactions., If so, immediately stop using it.

There are other milder products to treat dandruff. A mixture of olive oil and almond oil can produce the same result for you. Massage your scalp with the mixture and leave it for five minutes after you feel the burning sensation. Rinse properly and you should have a dandruff-free head.

Did you know the well-known pain killer **aspirin**, used for relieving aches, can serve you equally effectively to eliminate the problem of dandruff? Just crush and powder two aspirin tablets and add it to your shampoo. Leave the mixture on your scalp for two minutes. Rinse and wash properly to remove the aspirin

particles completely from the scalp. **Aspirin** is one that I'd advise that you try first!

While Aloe Vera serves as a base for many anti-dandruff shampoos, you can directly use Aloe Vera gel to remove excess dandruff. Apply the gel on your scalp 10-15 minutes before you plan to wash your hair.

I believe owning your own Aloe Vera plant. Getting it directly from the plant is a sure-fire way of getting the perfect Aloe Vera. Regular use of the gel before shampooing will keep down the growth of dandruff.

Citrus fruits like lemon combat the problem of dandruff well. Just massage the scalp with lemon juice and leave it on for five minutes then wash it thoroughly.

Some of the old remedies for dandruff involve treating your scalp with witch hazel. You can soak a cotton ball with liquid witch hazel and dab the scalp with it. Washing the scalp with the solution is also effective in giving you freedom from the problem of dandruff.

Many plants and trees have therapeutic qualities; all you need to do is to use them appropriately.

There is also Neem extract, used for killing bacteria. You can boil a few Neem leaves in water and use the liquid for rinsing your hair. The liquid, which is formed, is beneficial for fighting the fungus responsible for dandruff.

Another old remedy for dandruff is to use boric acid. Rub it on your scalp, wash it with warm water and then shampoo the hair as you regularly do.

Another method to add to the endless list is to rub peanut oil into the scalp followed by an application of lemon juice.

If you are suffering from severe dandruff, you will find many home remedies available for you. You should give each remedy at least a week before trying another.

These remedies take time to show a visible change but are effective for some people.

An extremely dry scalp is as much responsible for flakiness as An extremely oily scalp. If your body regulates the oil content well, the fungus will not have a favorable environment to spread uncontrollably. The simple and easy to apply treasure of home remedies offers you a permanent solution for combating dandruff.

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11. General Cure for Mild Dandruff

Now, you know that *Pityrosporum Ovale*, a fungus that thrives on oily scalp, causes it. An oily scalp provides a suitable environment for its over-production. People suffering from dandruff shed their skin more readily, causing deposition of dead cell clusters. Various kinds of effective treatments are available to combat dandruff.

Many anti-dandruff shampoos are good to minimize the effects of dandruff. Some common ingredients of an anti-dandruff shampoo are Pyrithione, Climbazole, Zinc, Ketoconazole and Octopirox. While these ingredients are mild in nature, your doctor might recommend to you a stronger solution if he finds it suitable for you.

Some products are only effective if you are constantly using them, while others may be for occasional use. You should go through all the details before you start a treatment. Some doctors feel that alternating use of an anti-dandruff shampoo and your usual shampoo would bring better results. Opinions are divided on this issue and you can try both procedures to find which pattern works best for you.

I will tell you right now that, even if you found one that worked for some time, it may stop working. You wonder why? You need to switch your shampoos. Shampoos cause built up residue. Changing your shampoo around is wonderful for your hair.

Hair experts suggest that a firm but gentle motion while shampooing helps boost circulation. It also facilitates in exfoliation of the old skin. If you comb

or brush your hair rigorously you will aggravate the scalp problem. You may feel like giving yourself a new look through coloring but it might irritate the scalp further. You should also postpone your idea for a hair perm and try to check the overgrowth of dandruff first. You may not mind blow-drying but your scalp condition might worsen as a result.

Proper hair care can reduce the effect of dandruff considerably. Myths like, “dandruff is caused by excessive dryness” may make you afraid to wash your hair. Do not be afraid to wash your hair often. In fact, more people have dandruff that is caused by too much oil rather than too much dryness.

Brushing your hair more will also help. This does not mean the old adage of 100 times per day. Brush your hair a few times per day.

If you are using gel and hairspray, why not give your head a rest and see if that reduces unsightly flakes?

The most popular brands of shampoo also manufacture their anti-dandruff variety. The ones, which are rich in fungicides like selenium sulfide and zinc Pyrithione have proven helpful to many dandruff sufferers.

Mild dandruff is a common phenomenon that needs your attention before it gets severe. While some common conditions trigger dandruff overgrowth, you will be safer if you avoid excessive exposure to the sun.

Treatment of dandruff varies from herbal therapy to nutritional and chemical therapy. It depends on your special needs. If dandruff has suddenly overgrown and you feel there is an internal cause for it, go for a cure accordingly. An internal problem cannot be completely solved through external remedies. Check for factors like hormonal imbalance, emotional stress or poor health

conditions. You have to apply discretion in determining the underlying cause. Only then, can you find an effective cure. No treatment can work magically, it takes its time, so be patient and do not give up too early. Once you choose the right treatment, the path to a dandruff-free scalp is just a matter of few days.

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12. Nutritional Therapy for Dandruff

You are partly what you eat. Your eating habits and your food usage may be responsible for the problem dandruff. The three main treatment techniques for dandruff include nutritional therapy, relaxation therapy and herbal therapy.

From a traditional medical viewpoint, excessive dandruff may result when the body accumulates extra protein but is unable to absorb it in the system.

Another view says that it may be a symptom of kidney or liver disorder. All these put attention on the nutritional aspect. You need to focus more on getting a balanced diet and will have to cut back the intake of spicy and acidic food.

Do you know that some food items cause allergic reactions that may trigger overgrowth of dandruff? Some common foods like chocolate, shellfish, nuts etc., that you enjoy eating, may cause allergies. Excessive intake of dairy products, seafood and fatty food items can exacerbate dandruff. If you reduce the intake of animal proteins and supplement your diet with beans, fresh vegetables, fruit and grains you can check the overgrowth of dandruff.

Vitamin B-complex helps to control the effect of dandruff a lot. Making minor changes in your food habits; reducing intake of sugar, salt and alcohol may help. If you start taking 1 tablespoon of flaxseed oil daily, you will get an enough omega-3 fatty acids. This fatty acid is effective for various skin treatments including overgrowth of dandruff as well. You would have never thought that even garlic, alfalfa, avocados and oats could offer successful treatment for dandruff control. So, when you feel stressed by overgrowing dandruff, try nutritional treatments before you opt for other alternatives.

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13. Herbs and Supplement for Treatment

Human beings have long depended on herbs and supplements for various cures. When treating dandruff with herbs and other supplements, you have a score of things to help. One of the most well established formulas uses tea tree oil, scientifically called *Melaleuca Alternifolia*. Massage the oil into your scalp for long-term relief from itching and scaling. If you have an internal problem and your body is deficient in gamma linolenic acid, vital for healthy hair and skin, start adding evening primrose or black currant oil to your daily diet. An average dose of 500mg twice a day would begin to show results. Once the change becomes obvious, cut the dose in half.

Dandruff can infect your scalp for several reasons. You can combat the effects of dandruff through substances that have antifungal characteristics, which deter the dandruff-causing fungus, *Malassezia furfur*. Similarly, the remedies are effective when they have anti-inflammatory and low irritability properties. A normal healthy scalp maintains a proper acid or alkaline balance. The overgrowth of dandruff distorts it.

Apple cider vinegar kills the microbes that clog the oil releasing pores and helps to maintain the normal pH balance. Apply concentrated vinegar to the scalp directly and wash it off after a few hours. Another way is to dilute it with water. You need not rinse the scalp after that.

Lemon also serves the same purpose. The acidic nature of these substances helps the scalp to restore its normal chemical balance. In certain cases, rubbing pure coconut oil into the scalp also helps to fight dandruff while rubbing vitamin E oil into the scalp reduces scaling and relieves itching.

Aloe Vera extract is used in the manufacture of many cosmetics. You can use Aloe Vera to treat the overgrowing dandruff as well. Rub the gel produced from Aloe Vera leaves into your scalp and leave it overnight. Shampooing the hair in the morning can yield surprising effects.

Another effective treatment of dandruff is grapefruit seed extract. You can mix 7-10 drops of the extract in your shampoo and massage it well on the scalp. Keep it on for two minutes, then rinse thoroughly. Did you know that ginger can help with dandruff? A combination of ginger and olive oil can bring the relief from dandruff. Make a mixture of ginger root and olive oil and apply it on your scalp for a few minutes before shampooing.

Herbs like thyme, rosemary and tea carry therapeutic features, effective in curing dandruff completely. Boil four teaspoons of dried thyme in two cups of water for ten minutes and allow the mixture to cool down. You can use it on damp hair and leave it on the scalp. The mixture has antiseptic properties that act on the scalp and cleanses it off. A combination of rosemary oil and olive oil makes your scalp dandruff-free. While tea is one of the most favourite beverages, you can prepare a different kind of tea to treat your dandruff. Prepare from sage and burdock and use the mixture for rinsing after shampooing your hair.

While Listerine® is a mouth freshener, it also has antiseptic properties that help in minimizing the effect of dandruff. It should not be used on areas that have broken skin as it may cause irritation.

It is not difficult to control the unchecked growth of dandruff. A sub-clinical condition that just needs timely attention, dandruff causes inflammation of scalp. It is not a disease but can provide a rich ground for other skin diseases like seborrhoea dermatitis, psoriasis, etc.

Dandruff is a part of the natural phenomenon and trouble starts only when it starts to grow uncontrollably. When dandruff concentration rises from a normal of 45% to 75%, it affects you adversely. It results in flaky scalp accompanied by itching.

Herbs like burdock, sage, nettle rosemary etc. can completely uproot the problem of dandruff. Most medicated shampoos have strong chemicals that often make your hair rough. Besides, the chemicals may further act negatively on a sensitive scalp. When you use herbs to treat your scalp for dandruff, you are certainly using something that may not have any side effects. Most of these herbs are good for your hair as well so, when you opt for them. you are going for something pure and healthy. While these herbs and supplements may take a bit longer to remove the excess dandruff, you will feel the effects are long lasting.

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14. Over The Counter Options

Over-the-counter (OTC) treatment is often beneficial for mild dandruff.

Dandruff does not need a check up from the doctor but, if the problem persists for long, it's best to consult a physician about it. Other conditions like psoriasis and seborrhea dermatitis also cause flaking of scalp, so you should not confuse them with dandruff. Dandruff causes untimely replenishment of scalp cells that form large clumps, as they cannot be so easily removed the way they replenish themselves.

While many products are available on the market that claim effective removal of the dead cells, not all are safe to use. The FDA banned twenty-seven ingredients found in different anti-dandruff shampoos in 1990, since they did not ensure safe and successful removal of dandruff.

The FDA has approved many ingredients for treating dandruff, like Pyrrithione zinc, selenium sulfide, salicylic acid, coal tar and sulfur. The main concern of the FDA is to look after your well-being.

Some anti-dandruff products are approved by the FDA. So you can buy them, even without a doctor's prescription, for treating dandruff. These products are available in different forms, varying from shampoos to rinses and even those that you apply and leave on the scalp.

Over-the-counter (OTC), drug products have various outlets throughout the nation. The Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association reports that around 75,000 outlets are available nationwide. It further reports that dandruff

is one of the ten topmost problems treated with OTC drug products. Around half the numbers of dandruff sufferers use OTC products to treat dandruff.

There is a difference between shampoos and drugs in their respective nature. A shampoo that has beautifying and cleansing properties cannot be classified under a drug. It is more a cosmetic. When it claims to treat and prevent the condition then it is considered a drug.

It is difficult to control the overgrowth of dandruff without using any chemical products to deter its effects. The only means to combat it mechanically is to wash the scalp regularly to remove the accumulated flakes. This is not very effective in fighting dandruff. Apart from that, you have to choose OTC dandruff shampoos to treat it. While many such shampoos are available, you have to find out which particular one suits you most appropriately. Anti-dandruff shampoos manufactured by Head & Shoulders™ contain zinc Pyrithione, an antibacterial and antifungal agent. It acts on the dandruff causing fungus and reduces it considerably.

Similarly, shampoos containing salicylic acid help in elimination of scales but often make the scalp drier. This can cause further flaking. If you use a conditioner after it, the dryness can be treated successfully. Shampoos containing selenium sulfide prevents excessive turnover of the cell and controls Malassezia growth but you may not like to discolor light colored hair. Selsun® produces anti-dandruff shampoos. The latest anti-dandruff shampoo is manufactured using Ketaconazole, which is a very strong antifungal agent. It is very effective in treating dandruff. Coal tar is yet another ingredient that helps in treating dandruff.

Coal tar is one of the most important ingredients of OTC dandruff products. It is produced from bituminous coal. While it does have some side effects, these

are triggered only when one has long exposure to coal tar. Since the scalp comes under its contact for a very short span of time, the chances of causing harmful effects become negligible. If you treat psoriasis and seborrhea dermatitis with coal tar, it has longer contact with the skin and thus becomes a bit unsafe. Further, coal tar is noted to produce photosensitivity reaction as well. When you use a product containing coal tar, parts of it that may be harmful for you in certain respects may remain on the scalp. Thus, under guidance of FDA, a note accompanies coal tar containing products that highlight the precautions to be taken while using these products.

Almost all OTC products have Antimicrobial, Antipruritic, Keratolytics or Corticosteroid formulas. The antimicrobial formula helps to fight the microbe that is most likely to cause dandruff. Scientists are yet to conclude that microorganisms like P. Ovale cause dandruff, yet elements like zinc Pyrithione present in the OTC products control their growth considerably and consequently checks overgrowth of dandruff. Antipruritics help curb scaling and itching while Keratolytics prevent scale formation and loosen the scales already present to be washed off easily. Corticosteroid adds on to the benefit of Antipruritics and facilitates in improving the scalp condition because of its anti-inflammatory properties.

Over-the-counter treatment is necessary to deter the effect of dandruff. While the only means to treat it is to wash your hair regularly, it is hardly effective. A wide range of OTC options are available to you and you can choose the best for you among them. While these OTC products may not be without side effects, you should minimize their harmful effects through proper usage and utilize them in the best possible manner.

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15. Options of Dandruff Shampoos

When you suffer from a problem like dandruff, you have myriad of options to choose from. The Head & Shoulders™ brand is an established name in providing you effective anti-dandruff shampoos. The anti-dandruff shampoos of today are more sophisticated and helpful in combating dandruff. Pantene™ also promises a good solution to the problem of dandruff. To select the best suitable product, you have to try a few and find out which one suits you the best. There is no proven cure for dandruff once you are affected by it, you have to learn to control and manage it.

Consistent use of an anti-dandruff product is the key to a dandruff-free scalp. Stopping your use of these combating agents can result in dandruff again. Once you thoroughly clean the scalp, it takes three days to start off the flakes again. If you are using a detergent-based shampoo, the problem of dandruff may worsen further. Mild shampoos protect the scalp from drying while strong ones can trigger dryness through the effects of harsh chemicals.

A look at the development of anti-dandruff products would reveal that earlier Head & Shoulders™ produced the best anti-dandruff shampoos. Other brands to follow were Banish™, Fostex™, Enden™, Rinse Away™ and Double Danderine™.

The ultimate aim of each brand of shampoo was to control the natural phenomenon of flaking. This was done either by slowing down the flaking process or by reducing colonization of Pityrosporum yeast. The simplest way was to shampoo more often by using a mild shampoo to remove flaking. Leaving the shampoo on for a while also helped remove excess flakes.

Some of the most established brands of anti-dandruff shampoos today include Head & Shoulders®, Neutrogena®, Pert Plus®, Tegrin®, Selsun Blue® Pantene® and Pro-V Dandruff Formula®. Nizoral® shampoo has a patented ingredient ketoconazole that is active in controlling dandruff. It is the only shampoo that has patented the right to an ingredient. Medically proved, ketoconazole actively inhibits the growth of the fungus Pityrosporum Ovale.

The working formula of other shampoos is based on standardizing the pH balance of the scalp. Nizoral® is a trusted companion of pharmacists and doctors. It is the result of sincere research and long studies for over a decade. Its unique feature carries the anti-dandruff effect even long after you have rinsed the scalp. Thus, you need not use it daily, which further proves it quite cost-effective.

The best method to treat mild dandruff is to wash your hair regularly with a gentle shampoo. If you successfully remove the dandruff from your scalp, you are likely to ward off mild dandruff. To treat severe dandruff you can also try zinc Pyrithione based shampoo. It is an antibacterial and antifungal agent found in most well-known brands of shampoos like Head & Shoulders® and Suave Dandruff Control Shampoo®. Other effective ingredients that deter the effects of dandruff include coal tar and selenium sulfide. Neutrogena®, Tegrin® and T/Gel® shampoos contain coal tar, which slows down the turnover of cells.

They bear a characteristic earthy smell and are effective in reducing itching as well. Coal tar has side effects like lightening the hair color and making the scalp very sensitive to sunlight. If you are worried about dandruff, a little discomfort is worth bearing. Selenium sulfide also slows down the cell turnover. It effectively reduces Malassezia. Selsun® and Exsel® are the two

brands that contain this ingredient. Lonil T® is the brand of shampoo that utilizes salicylic acid to control dandruff. It helps in scrubbing the scales of the scalp to get rid off the white flakes. You should use a conditioner with it, as it has a tendency to make the scalp dry.

While shampoos are useful in minimizing the effects of dandruff, sometimes you may need to resort to steroid solutions and lotions. Steroid lotions are good for controlling severe dandruff accompanying itching and inflammation. Lotions like Lidex®, Temovate®, Synalar®, and Dermasmoothe® have different steroid concentrations.

Your doctor can correctly advise you about the most appropriate one for you. For best result, use it at bedtime after dampening the hair. When the medicine reaches the scalp and stays on it for a while it yields desired results. If you find an effective remedy, you can bring even the most severe dandruff under check.

Roberta Boyd, an Associate Director of scalp care and anti-dandruff technology at Procter and Gamble pointed out that even mild anti-dandruff shampoos can combat the problem of dandruff effectively. She also highlighted the harmful effects of scratching the scalp and said that it can be detrimental to good health. Anti-dandruff shampoos containing Pyrithione zinc are mild in nature and yet are good for curing dandruff.

The ingredient is not reactive in nature and can exist independently alongside other cosmetic ingredients of the shampoo. It is the most preferred choice. It helps the hair to maintain its former texture. It is devoid of any strong odor and does not carry other hair-damaging effects. Observations reveal that after shampooing the hair with zinc Pyrithione shampoo it was easy to disentangle the hair. This proved the shampoo did not roughen the cuticles of hair and kept

it in good condition. This mild anti-dandruff ingredient is preferred over others because of its effectiveness and negligible side effects.

Thus, the next time you go in for an over-the-counter product, read the label carefully and see if it contains zinc Pyrithione. The ingredient is the hallmark of safe removal of dandruff and enough protection of your shiny, silky, hair.

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16. Treatment in Severe Cases

When any problem takes a serious turn, you cannot treat it casually any longer. Even though dandruff is not recognized as a disease, it needs your attention in severe cases. A dermatologist is the right person to help you under such circumstances.

Usually he prescribes an ointment or lotion to soothe your itchy scalp. Lotions and ointments containing zinc Pyrithione or selenium sulfide are good for inhibiting unchecked dandruff growth. Other related skin disease that also cause redness of scalp with scabbing and swelling is psoriasis. Confirm the nature of your problem and its likely cause before you choose a remedy for it.

Dandruff is not an age-specific problem and can occur at any time. There is still a point of contention on what triggers excessive growth of dandruff. Some harbor the view that dandruff results from excessive sebum production of the scalp while others believe the fungus *Malassezia furfur* facilitates its growth. An excessively dry scalp is equally favourable for it as an oily one. Avoid scratching your scalp as it may aggravate the problem further. Treating dandruff requires regular and persistent use of the remedial products. In severe cases when over-the-counter treatment does not work for you, a suspension of selenium sulfide may bring the desired relief.

Selenium sulfide produces effective medication to reduce the effects of P. Ovale. Scientists believe the material converts into ions that act on enzymes that facilitate cell growth and block their activity. This results in lower cell growth and thus considerably reduces scaling. Steroid lotion is yet another product that controls itching and inflammation. It is effective in treating mild

to severe dandruff. The FDA has also approved an anti-fungal cream ketoconazole for treatment of severe dandruff. It is available by prescription only. The cream is believed to act on P. Ovale but patients who have benefited from it show minor reduction of the fungus on the scalp.

A combination of 2% ketoconazole and 1% zinc Pyrithione result in more effective control over mild and severe dandruff. The dandruff controlling properties of both these items work together. Around 49 patients were treated with ketoconazole shampoo and others with a combination of ketoconazole plus zinc Pyrithione shampoo. The result was markedly in favor of the combination shampoo. It proved to be a more effective cure.

You can control dandruff by using shampoos and ointments but it may recur if the problem has something to do with your internal metabolic processes. The Encyclopedia of Natural Healing states that proper nutrition is vital for controlling dandruff. Inadequate metabolism of fatty acids and carbohydrates can be the underlying cause of dandruff. You can increase the intake of B vitamins in your diet to combat the inadequacy. Rich sources of B vitamins include raw wheat germ and Brewer's Yeast – Brewer's yeast comes in tablets or in powder and has a very strong flavor. You can get it at your local drug store or a health food store. I add it to milk.

If you cannot stand the flavor, you can get tablets, or you can mix it with ½ a cup of grapefruit juice.

In fact, when my sister's kids were little, she used to make them a cereal bottle. She knew doctors warned us about feeding babies cereal bottles, but she was careful. She fed this to them when they were small.

Milk or (baby formula)

- ⇒ Banana
- ⇒ 1 tsp of wheat germ
- ⇒ 1 tsp brewer's yeast
- ⇒ 1 raw egg (now, the egg has to be all organic, or none at all)
- ⇒ ABC Vitamin Drops®
- ⇒ ¼ cup baby cereal

She'd mix it all up and feed it in a bottle with a punctured bigger hole.

They'd drink that down in the morning. Later, as they were weaned from bottles, they'd only drink about half a cup of the solution.

However, her oldest son did not get his first cold until he was six and not again until he was eleven. Nutrition starts in your own home.

You can make yourself a blender-full of nutrition and drink it for breakfast.

My other sister had a boyfriend with very pale skin. He had dandruff, psoriasis, eczema and acne. We had him take brewer's yeast - two tablespoons in a ½ cup of grapefruit juice once a day. We were amazed at the clearing of his skin, the dandruff leaving and his acne going away. The reason for the grapefruit juice was it helped with the flavor of the concoction. You can buy brewer yeast pills now!

Other sources include cabbage and eggs that provide sulfur to your body as well as vitamin B6. These foods are rich in vitamin B6, which is effective in controlling excessive growth of dandruff.

You might not know that oil of oregano and garlic help in effectively combating dandruff. They can be used internally or externally as it suits you. Further, the high concentration of sulfur in onions makes them a suitable cure for a dandruff-affected scalp.

An effective home remedy for treating dandruff resorts to the use of hot and cold water treatment. It helps in pacing up the circulation process. It also gets impetus through exercising in fresh air and yoga headstands. Regular washing also helps in dandruff reduction.

Regular washing by using harsh shampoos may cause the sebaceous glands to overproduce oil to compensate the loss. Brushing the hair before shampooing helps loosen the scales and helps in their removal.

The chemical products acting on dandruff also carry some side effects that may bring some other undesirable changes. For example, selenium products often have discoloring effects on the hair. Some other prescription products also trigger itching, dryness of the hair and in some severe cases even cause hair loss. Under such conditions, one should immediately discontinue the use of that product and consult a physician to find its underlying cause.

After all, you cannot bargain a dandruff-free scalp at the cost of hair loss. Not all prescription drugs produce the same effect. You may find a particular one that does not have any allergic reactions or major side effects to treat your dandruff-pestered scalp. Dandruff is not a great clinical problem but it causes extensive humiliation and embarrassment. You should try to identify the cause

of your dandruff problem before you try for a cure. If you have large oily flakes of dandruff, then you are most likely suffering from dandruff because of excessive oil secretion of sebaceous glands. Try an anti-dandruff lotion or shampoo that works on an oily scalp.

The dandruff-free scalp would instill a new confidence in you.

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17. When to See the Doctor

Dandruff is hardly worth visiting a doctor for. However, sometimes when the situation becomes serious and you start developing red itchy patches on your scalp, you definitely need the aid of a doctor.

When it spreads and affects skin around the eyebrows, ears and nose, it indicates a severe form of skin problem. Doctors call it seborrhea dermatitis. Another more severe condition occurs when you develop lumpy or patchy dandruff and scaly skin. This condition is known as psoriasis.

If you have tried many home remedies and over the counter solutions and your dandruff is not getting better, you need to consult a doctor. A look at the scalp will tell him the nature of the problem and provide you with its probable cure.

Keep a journal. Write down what you eat, what you have used to wash your hair with. Write down how you dried your hair, towel, or dryer. Mention what kind of soap the towel was washed in. Write down anything that you think of to help your doctor find a solution for you.

Using a strong chemical to check dandruff may have harmful effects. The prolonged use of some anti-dandruff treatments may cause permanent damage resulting in problems like high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, or obesity.

Your doctor would correctly tell you what the underlying factor for such overgrowth of dandruff is. While you may think your scalp has grown oily and apply treatments accordingly, your doctor might identify something else to be the underlying reason.

Further, you might think the yellow, large-sized dandruff flakes are due to a dry scalp; your doctor would tell you the opposite. An expert's advice is indispensable and you should see a doctor if your initial efforts fail to bring the desired results.

Mild itching often accompanies dandruff. If itchiness goes beyond bearing capacity, you should consult a doctor. Even though dandruff is one of the most common problems, you should not neglect it if the problem persists. The doctor may even advise you a home remedy for your problem that you can easily do yourself. Self-medication is not desirable as it may worsen your discomfort further.

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Part-V: Treatment of Dandruff

18. Changes to Make in Diet and Products

If you are looking out for food products that may influence dandruff growth, you have to be careful about sugar intake in your diet. Sugar metabolism involves great fluid assimilation that may leave the body dehydrated. A dehydrated skin is prone to the effects of dandruff. If you wish to reduce the sugar intake without compromising on taste, you can go for sweetening agents like fructose, glucose, lactose etc.

Some food items containing yeast facilitate growth of the fungus *Malassezia furfur*, so you should avoid them while suffering from overgrowth of dandruff on your scalp. Food products like baked cake, bread, fermented condiments, alcoholic beverages and cheese contain yeasts that may provide a congenial ground for dandruff. Further, you should curtail the intake of fried food to put a check on dandruff.

Green leafy vegetables and raw foods are good for controlling dandruff.

Vitamins help perfect the metabolic reaction and deter the internal causes of dandruff. Biotin, a water-soluble B vitamin, helps in breaking down carbohydrates, fats and proteins. A dose of 3,000 mcg twice a day is ideal for combating dandruff. Other nutritional supplements that help control dandruff include vitamin A, zinc, vitamin B complex and omega-6 fatty acid.

Certain habits can aggravate the condition of dandruff further. If you use hot water while rinsing your scalp, you are providing ample ground for dandruff overgrowth. Heat causes scalp irritation and promotes dandruff growth.

Shampooing with lukewarm water and rinsing the scalp with cool water is the proper way to wash your hair. If you feel that a particular shampoo is beneficial for some time and loses its effectiveness later, switch to another product that serves your purpose.

Dandruff deposits on your scalp and a product that simply tries to force the dandruff from the scalp may lead to further complications. The scalp may produce more scales. You should treat it gently and calm the scalp. For mild dandruff, it is better to wash the scalp often with a mild shampoo.

For severe dandruff, you should go in for prescription medication. Ingredients like selenium sulfide, zinc Pyrithione and chloroxin are effective in treating severe dandruff problems but may cause irritation to sensitive skin. They slow down the cell replenishment process and bring dandruff formation back to normal. Excessive use of strong anti-dandruff products may make your problem worse so use them with caution.

The best way to apply a shampoo on your scalp is to dilute the solution beforehand. Applying a diluted shampoo solution ensures better and thorough washing. Form the lather gently without scratching the scalp roughly and rinse the hair properly. Sometimes while blow-drying the hair the heated air may be directed towards the scalp. This also aggravates production of dandruff and worsens the scalp condition.

A thorough understanding of the cause that triggers dandruff overgrowth on your scalp would help you to control it effectively.

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Part-VI: Prevention of Dandruff

19. Some Useful Tips and Guidelines

The problem arises when production of new cells rise considerably while the removal process progresses on at its normal speed. Various tips and guidelines can control production of dandruff while none can completely cure it.

Shampooing your hair daily with a dandruff shampoo is good to control dandruff. If you leave the lather for a few minutes on the scalp and rinse afterwards, it yields better results.

Most anti-dandruff shampoos are strong and may cause hair damage. For a better result, use a conditioner. It will help to smooth out tangles of the hair.

Once dandruff comes under control, you can start to use the anti-dandruff shampoo periodically with your regular shampoo.

If you do not get enough relief from these over-the-counter products, you should seek a doctor's advice. If the flakes are also present elsewhere, you may be suffering from any other skin problem like seborrhea dermatitis or psoriasis.

A cytostatic agent reduces the rate of multiplication of cells present in the top layer of the scalp. Zinc Pyrithione and selenium sulfide are important ingredients of anti-dandruff shampoos. They are cytostatic agents that prevent uncontrolled cell multiplication. Use of these materials help reduce dandruff considerably.

Selenium sulfide may cause harmful effects if the scalp has abrasions or cuts on it. You should not use a shampoo containing selenium sulfide in such a case.

A tar-based shampoo is also helpful in controlling dandruff.

Some facts about Dandruff

Sometimes dandruff occurs only for a very short duration and may disappear without treatment. A lot depends on the cause that triggers it.

You can notice a sudden growth in dandruff when under stress. Internal causes affect dandruff growth as much as the external causes.

Dandruff worsens with build-up of oil and dirt. The flakes may enlarge further in their presence.

Gentle massaging of the scalp loosens the flakes and it gets easier to remove it through thorough rinsing.

Factors that Worsen Dandruff

Scratching of the scalp may break the skin and make it prone to the effects of harmful bacteria and germs. It may even damage the hair at its root and weaken it.

Use of hair gels may be harmful for a dandruff-stricken scalp. It can irritate the scalp and may increase dandruff growth.

If your scalp remains wet for a considerable time, it may facilitate dandruff growth. Moisture helps in the growth of the fungus *Malassezia furfur*, a probable cause of dandruff.

There are some beneficial bacteria found on your scalp. The bacteria controls the growth of dandruff-causing fungus on the scalp. Hair dye kills the beneficial bacteria and provides conditions for the fungus to multiply rapidly.

Using an anti-dandruff shampoo containing selenium sulfide within 48 hours of using a perm lotion or hair colorant destroys the effects of the chemical.

Natural remedies for controlling Dandruff

Tea tree oil is a natural product that effectively controls dandruff growth. A research article published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology in 2002 states that a shampoo containing 5% tea tree oil brought improvement in dandruff condition by 41%.

A liquid formed by boiling dried thyme in half litre of water is good for treating a dandruff-affected scalp.

Rubbing a thick gel of Aloe Vera into the scalp and leaving it overnight results in controlling dandruff greatly.

Treating the scalp with a combination of olive oil and almond oil also helps in deterring the overgrowth of dandruff.

Special requirements of an anti-dandruff product

When you look for an anti-dandruff product, you should search for the following properties:

Dandruff often accompanies itching. Look for a product that controls itching and gives you ample relief.

It is necessary to neutralize the effect of the yeast if you wish to control the overgrowth of dandruff.

Restoring the moisture balance is an essential aspect of keeping the scalp healthy and fighting excessive dandruff.

It should not produce any other irritation to the user and should be devoid of any major side-effects.

Apart from the anti-dandruff shampoos, there are other products available on the market that act on dandruff and reduce its effects to a minimum. You need to apply such products on the scalp for a few hours so they penetrate deeply and deter the effects of dandruff. They reach the hair follicles, the seat of the trouble-causing yeast and neutralize them. This method does not require regular washing but, if you have a habit to wash your hair daily, it does not interfere with it either.

Thus, you have many alternatives available for treating the unwanted overgrowth of dandruff. Choose the one that goes best with your needs.

Recap - Some Secrets to Beautiful, Shiny Hair

Wash with lower temperature water. Many people torture their hair with overly hot water.

Do not put the shampoo in the middle of your hand and push it into the middle of your scalp. Water down the shampoo solution and apply it gently into different areas of your scalp.

If you have acne, please note that shampoo can cause more acne. Rinse your face, neck and back well after using shampoo.

If you use conditioner, get a good brand that you let soak into your hair for a few minutes before rinsing thoroughly.

Pat your hair dry. Yes, go ahead and put the towel on your head into a turban but, when you take it off, pat the hair in between the towel instead of rubbing your head with it.

Never brush your hair when it is wet. Brushes break your hair.

Use a comb and pick up sections of your hair to comb easily and carefully.

Get regular trims. Many people want longer hair and believe that trimming will slow down the length growth. This is just not true. Without a trim, you get split ends. Split ends break and tear leaving ugly ends and actually will not let your hair grow as long as if you do get it trimmed.

Avoid hair dryers. They dry your hair out.

I've given you many ideas and ways to treat your dandruff. You keep that journal and try these solutions. You are sure to find one that does work for you! You will!

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