

Aromatherapy Applications for Hair Loss

By Jessica Lazarus

Seeing hair clogging the drain or filling up the hairbrush is enough to alarm anyone. Shedding hair is a natural occurrence. Losing more than the average 50-100 hairs a day may be a sign of a form of alopecia. There are many known causes of hair loss or alopecia. In situations where hormone imbalance, stress, and chemical sensitivities are contributing to hair loss, aromatherapy may aid the body in recovery.

Hormone imbalance can be a challenge for both men and women. Hair loss can occur when the body converts testosterone and other androgens, such as DHEA to DHT in an excessive manner.¹ “Hair loss may be a sign of thyroid or pituitary deficiency, or defective functioning of the ovaries” (Davis). These organs regulate the body’s hormones. Our hormones effect so many aspects of overall health. In a way, hair loss can be a signal of a more serious internal problem. Aromatherapy is utilized when there is a need for hormone regulation.

“This balancing action arises from the fact that Geranium is an adrenal cortex stimulant. The hormones secreted by the adrenal cortex are primarily regulators, governing the balance of hormones secreted by other organs, including male and female sex hormones; so it is of great assistance in menopausal problems and all conditions where a fluctuating hormone balance is indicated.” (Davis)

In this case, Geranium is noted for exhibiting balancing qualities. When hormones are back in balance, the side effect of hair loss may subside.

Stress can wreak havoc on the body causing or exacerbating any number of symptoms. One would be remiss in discounting the physical and emotional toll stress takes on the body. “Excessive physical or emotional stress associated with illness, injury, and trauma may cause

hair to stop growing and enter a period of dormancy which is followed two or three months later by the hair falling out” (Minton 2). People experience stress for many reasons. In situations where hair loss is present as a result of stress, the problem can be magnified by the fact that hair loss itself can cause a person even more stress and emotional upset. “Stress, shock and other mental and emotional problems are areas in which aromatherapy is particularly effective, and hair will often start growing again when the therapist has been able to help with the underlying cause” (Davis). With aromatherapy being able to address stress directly, there is a chance for the body’s equilibrium to be restored and for hair to get back to its normal growth.

The factors leading to hair loss are not always internal. Occasionally, hair loss can be attributed to external factors such as sensitivity to chemical ingredients in personal care products. An example of a potential irritant is Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS). SLS, which is found in most commercial shampoos, has been shown to corrode hair follicles and impede hair growth, additionally having toxic effects on the immune system (Minton 3). Strong chemicals can sensitize the scalp causing adverse reactions as well.

“Complete or partial loss of hair is sometimes caused by a food allergy, or by a chemical irritant, such as hair dyes, perms, industrial chemicals or fumes, and then obviously the avoidance of the irritant food or chemical is the first necessity; but essential oils can often be used to encourage hair growth once the irritant has been identified and removed.” (Davis)

A sure way to remove irritants from one’s personal environment is to make and use homemade all natural personal care products. There are many recipes available for shampoo, conditioner, styling aids and more. Valerie Ann Worwood lists three simple recipes for a shampoo base in

her book, The Complete Book of Essential Oils & Aromatherapy. Each formulation will have its own appeal to different individuals. The key is to have a shampoo base that is not irritating to the scalp. Depending on what conditions are being treated, specific essential oils can be added to this base. The recipe given for an Alopecia Shampoo is as follows:

Alopecia Shampoo

Soap stew (see note)	4 ounces
Johoba oil	12 drops
Carrot oil	6 drops
Rosemary	6 drops
Lavender	10 drops (Worwood 164).

Note: There are many variations of soap stew. One recipe is 4 ounces of soap flakes dissolved in 1 quart of spring water.

Precautions for Rosemary: Avoid during pregnancy. Not for children under 5. Do not use with epilepsy. Do not use with high blood pressure. Do not use with homeopathic remedies. Rosemary is stimulating in nature and may be too much four to six hours before sleeping. Precautions for Lavender: Do not use with low blood pressure. During pregnancy you can use from third trimester onward; use in moderation and low dilution (1% or less). Safe to use with children; use in moderation and low dilution (1% or less).

This recipe is simple and includes only ingredients that will nourish the scalp and hair, making it an excellent choice for an aid in healing.

Taking into account the many reasons the body may experience hair loss gives some insight into different ways to give support and restart the healthy growth cycle of hair.

Aromatherapy offers a way to treat a complaint by looking at the body as a whole. Different system imbalances or deficiencies can be addressed and treated even if a diagnosis is absent.

Often times, dermatologists and medical doctors will not be able to find a definitive reason for

hair loss, leaving them unable to prescribe a method of treatment. Aromatherapy allows for action to be taken in a way that supports the body.

Works Cited

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