

EMERGENCY GROOM!

Hair 'mares you can't cure with conditioner

Hair turned frizzy or lank? It could say something serious about your health

If your hair's not doing the big, bouncy thing, forget binning your blow-dryer or switching shampoos. Because a change in its condition could be a symptom of anaemia, thyroid problems, extreme stress and more. And you can't get that fixed with a blow-dry.

Skinny hair = anaemia

'Thinning hair can be linked to anaemia,' says nutritionist Dr Sarah Brewer. **Hair diet tip:** Do the anaemia 'eye test' by gently pulling down your lower lid. 'If it looks pale rather than pinkish red inside, you may be lacking iron,' says Sarah. 'Eat more red meat, apricots and watercress. Vitamin C helps your body absorb iron but cut down on tea – tannic acids can undo the good that OJ does.'

Gradual hair loss = polycystic ovaries

'Hair loss may be a sign of polycystic ovaries (PCOS) as follicles are sensitive to hormone levels,' says Glenn Lyons of the Philip Kingsley Trichological Clinic. **Hair diet tip:** A balanced diet helps keep hair follicles strong. 'Try a hair, skin and nail supplement,' says Sarah. 'PCOS is also a sign your body can't metabolise excess sugar, so cut back on the sweet snacks.'

Dull and lank = thyroid problems

'Lank hair can be a sign of an underactive thyroid that slows down your metabolism, meaning fewer new cells are made and your hair becomes brittle and lank,' says Sarah. If you're also gaining weight and feeling lethargic – other symptoms of thyroid problems – see your doctor as the problem can be easily treated with medication. **Hair diet tip:** Stock up on foods rich in iodine which boost thyroid activity – go for fish, kelp and seaweed. Vitamins and minerals designed for hair health will also help – try Dr Brewer's Trilog range, £7.99 from Boots and Tesco.

Flaky scalp = psoriasis

'A flaky scalp could be due to inflammation – dandruff, eczema or psoriasis,' says Sarah. 'Dandruff is caused by excess yeast so use a shampoo containing the antifungal agent ketoconazole such as Nizoral. If there's no improvement see your GP for further treatment.'

Hair diet tip: 'You can't tackle the excess yeast with your diet, but you can reduce inflammation by eating fruit, vegetables and fish as they have an anti-inflammatory effect,' explains Sarah. 'Aloe Vera products like Banana Boat Aloe Vera Gel, £5.99 for 100ml from Boots, will also help to soothe the scalp.'

Dry and frizzy = dehydration

'Your hair should contain ten per cent water,' says Marilyn Sherlock of the Institute of Trichologists. If it's overly frizzy it may be lacking in *l'eau*. Your diet may also be to blame. 'Dry hair could be due to a lack of essential fatty acids in your diet – they're found in nuts, seeds and oily fish,' says Sarah. **Hair diet tip:** 'An evening primrose oil supplement will boost the quality of your hair in three months,' Sarah adds.

Greasy = unhealthy diet

'Eating fatty food can lead to greasy hair depending on how your body handles fat,' says Sarah. 'The fats found in fish and nuts are all good but hydrogenated fats in meat and margarine can cause greasier hair.' **Hair diet tip:** 'Eating more fruit and vegetables – five portions a day – can reduce the amount of oil your body produces,' says Sarah. 'Follow a low fat diet and try swapping milk for soya milk.'

Patchy hair loss = stress

'Over eight million UK women suffer from hair loss,' says Mark Sharp of Mark Glenn Hair Enhancement, specialists in cosmetically disguising hair loss. 'Sudden, patchy hair loss is often a result of stressful situations that come as a shock to your body such as family loss or work issues,' adds Glenn Lyons. A trichologist will be able to help. **Hair diet tip:** 'Fruit and vegetables boost hair follicle health and reduce hair loss,' says Sarah. Cutting out caffeine will also reduce anxiety levels. Mark Glenn also has an instant hair-loss solution – synthetic extensions matched to your hair's colour and texture. Contact 020-7495 6969 or www.markglenn.com for more info.

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