

Know everything About Your Hairs

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Since ancient age people belonging to different age group had to bear the social embarrassment due to hair loss. This issue is a serious problem as it shakes ones self confidence and also affects an individual emotionally. Everyone despite biological and geographical variations, loses approximately 100 hairs every single day throughout life. The hairs grow at a rate of six inches a year, then rest. They rest as part of the normal life cycle, and then fall out after four to five years. Hair loss occurs when either the lost hairs are not replaced or more of the follicles go into the resting phase. The exact cause might be the following, varying from person to person:

Hormone Changes : Male-Pattern Baldness: Receding hair line with a bald spot on the crown. About one in four men has already started to lose his hair before the age of 30, and by the time they are 60 years old, two out of three men are bald or going bald.

Female Pattern Baldness : Overall thinning : Pregnancy (General) : Hair is constantly going through cycles of growth, resting, shedding. When hairs that are lost are not replaced, or when more hair follicles go into the resting phase, hair loss becomes noticeable. While there is ongoing debate regarding hair loss reasons, the list below shows many of the common contributing factors:

Ageing : The period for hair loss is between the 20 and 50 years of age. Some individuals arrive at the advance stages of hair loss sooner than others although it becomes increasingly evident as people advance in age.

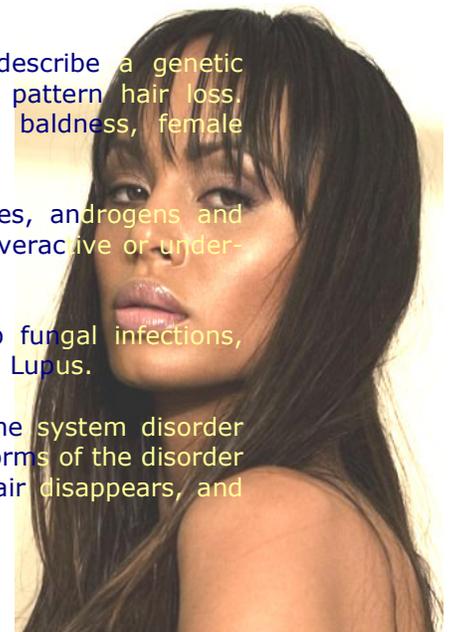
Cosmetic Chemicals : Particularly bleaching, permanents, coloring. Drugs/Medications/Radiation : Included are anticoagulants, antidepressants, contraceptive pills, amphetamines, some arthritis medications, some antibiotics, some blood thinners, medicines for gout, drugs derived from vitamin-A, certain drugs for ulcers, beta blocker drugs for high blood pressure. Cancer treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy halt the growth phase of hair follicles which results in a sudden hair loss as those follicles all shed their hair at about the same time.

Heredity : Androgenetic alopecia is the term used to describe a genetic predisposition in men and women for pattern baldness or pattern hair loss. Although there is a dominant tendency for male pattern baldness, female members of a family can be transmitters as well.

Hormonal Imbalance : If the male and female hormones, androgens and estrogens, are out of balance, hair loss may result. Also an overactive or under-active thyroid gland can contribute to hair loss.

Illness and Severe Infections : These can include scalp fungal infections, Thyroid disorders, Hyperthyroidism, Hypothyroidism, Diabetes, Lupus.

Immune System Disorder : Alopecia areata is an immune system disorder which causes hair follicles to stop producing hairs. Advanced forms of the disorder are identified by the terms alopecia totalis when all head hair disappears, and alopecia universalis which results in all body hair disappearing.



Menopause: Due to hormonal changes after menopause, some women find their hair begins to thin. There are a variety of treatments available involving hormone replacement therapy (HRT). There may be side effects in some cases and experimentation may be necessary under the guidance of a physician.

Poor Blood Circulation: Poor blood flow to the scalp, insufficient nutrients in the blood, or poor drainage of waste products through the lymphatic systems can all contribute.

Pregnancy: Three to six months after delivering a child, many women notice a degree of hair loss as the hair goes into a resting phase because of the physiological impact of the pregnancy on the body.

Birth control pills: women who have a genetic predisposition to suffer from Androgenic Alopecia can have it occur at a much younger age by taking birth control pills. The hormonal changes that occur trigger the onset of the Androgenic Alopecia. If a woman has a history of female pattern loss in her family she should advise her doctor before going on the pill. After the discontinuation of the pill the woman may notice that her hair begins shedding two or three months later. This may continue for 6 months when it usually stops. In some cases the process can't be reversed and the woman may not regrow some of the hair that was lost.

High fever, severe infection, severe flu: Sometimes one to three months after a high fever, severe infection or flu, a person may experience hair loss, this is usually temporary and corrects itself.

Thyroid disease : Both an overactive thyroid and an under-active thyroid can cause hair loss. Thyroid disease can be diagnosed by your physician with laboratory tests. Hair loss associated with thyroid disease can be reversed with proper treatment.

Deficient diet: Some people who go on low protein diets, or have severely abnormal eating habits, may develop protein malnutrition. To help save protein the body shifts growing hair into the resting phase. If this happens massive amounts of hair shedding can occur two to three months later. A sign of this is if the hair can be pulled out by the roots fairly easily. This condition can be reversed and prevented by eating the proper amount of protein. Its very important when dieting to maintain an adequate protein intake.

Deficiency in Protein and Iron is found to be the foremost reasons for hair loss. Hair falling is noticed widely only after the body recognizes the deficiency of proteins or iron. Hair loss due to deficiency of proteins and iron takes place 3 months after the body notices their deficiency. This happens after about three months of deficiency. You can easily avoid hair loss due to deficiency of proteins and iron by including proteins and iron in the diet.



Cancer treatments: Chemotherapy and radiation treatment will cause hair loss because it stops hair cells from dividing. Hairs become thin and break off as they exit the scalp. This occurs one to three weeks after the treatment. Patients can lose up to 90 percent of their scalp hair. The hair will regrow after treatment ends and patients may want to get wigs before treatment. There are some drugs in development to help prevent this hair loss from occurring.

Low serum iron : Iron deficiency occasionally produces hair loss. Some people don't have enough iron in their diets or may not fully absorb iron in their diets.

Women who have heavy menstrual periods may develop iron deficiency. Low iron can be detected by laboratory tests and can be corrected by taking iron pills.

Major surgery/chronic illness: Anyone who has a major operation - a tremendous shock to the system - may notice increased hair shedding within one to three months afterwards. The condition reverses itself within a few months but people who have a severe chronic illness may shed hair indefinitely. A relatively unknown fact is that hair transplantation surgery can actually cause additional hair loss or "shock fallout". Hairs lost from shock fallout usually don't regrow.

Alopecia Areata : This type of hair loss is believed to be caused by the immune system reacting to hair follicles as if they were antibodies and shutting them down. The hair loss is usually limited to a coin sized area and all the hair in the area is lost leaving a totally smooth round patch. In a more severe rarer condition called Alopecia Totalis, all hair on the entire body is lost, including the eyelashes. Treatments include topical medications, a special kind of light treatment, or in some cases drugs. Caused by a fungus infection, ringworm (which has nothing to do with worms) begins

Fungus Infection (Ringworm) of the scalp : with small patches of scaling that can spread and result in broken hair, redness, swelling, and even oozing. This contagious disease is most common in children and oral medication will cure it.

Pulling: Traction Alopecia is the term used to describe loss of hair from constant pulling, as with tightly braided hair styles such as pony tails. Also the improper use of curling tongs or rollers can tug the hair so it weakens.

Sebum Buildup : Sebum buildup in the follicles attacks the hair bulb, the rounded area at the end of a hair strand, is rooted in the follicle. Sebum causes the hair bulb to shrink so the hair is not as well rooted. After the hair falls out the new hair strand growing in that follicle is weaker and thinner and the process is repeated until the hair follicle is so damaged it dies. (Sebum is a fatty substance secreted from the sebaceous glands most of which open into hair follicles.)

Stress and Nervous Disorders : Telogen Effluvium is the term used for a slowing down of new hair growth because of sudden or severe stress. The stress triggers a large number of hair follicles to enter the resting stage, so a few months after the stressful event, those follicles shed hair at about the same time.



Improper hair care can also be one of the main causes for hair loss such as excessive combing or brushing, wearing hair styles such as ponytails or braids, which pulls at the hair, and also the over usage of chemicals such as bleaches & dyes. If these are avoided then you can prevent your hair loss to a great extent. Hair also needs proper care...so give it adequate care for its healthy growth. Presence of high level of DHT in the scalp manipulates the growth cycle of hair by averting the accessibility of the nutrients to the hair thereby causing excessive hair falling.

Natural balding is irreversible. However, we can still protect our hair from damage that may eventually lead to thinning or baldness. Women generally put their hair under tremendous stress in the pursuit of beauty. Hair dryers, hot curlers, dyes, bleaches, hair straightening, permanent waves and chemical-laden cosmetics may eventually result in dry, broken, and thinning hair. People who leave their hair its natural color and texture will end up with healthier hair. Losing hair is a part of our life and we should look at this phenomenon naturally. Of course, if there is sudden hair loss or due to other medical reasons, the doctors are always there to help and we must immediately seek the medical

advice from a dermatologist but otherwise, if we are just a bit careful, hair loss can be controlled. Never forget, if you have bald family members, you may find one beautiful morning your pillow covered with hair, or your hair brush with more hairs than your head. If this sounds worrisome, then you might want to learn some hair loss prevention tips.

As we know, there are a number of reasons of hair loss, naturally a number of remedies would also be there. However, let us start from the general health related tips which are otherwise good for our health. First of all, let us know about the Vitamins and Minerals which are directly or indirectly linked to our hair. In many cases, hair loss is attributed to a physical condition, such as Thyroid disease, or the lack of proper nutrition. Certain medications can also strip your body of vitamins and minerals that are essential for healthy hair production and growth. In these cases, the proper vitamin and mineral regimen can significantly reduce hair loss and promote new hair growth.

Vitamins and Minerals : We know that hair loss may also occur when the diet is inadequate in the B vitamins - especially B6, biotin, inositol and folic acid; and the minerals magnesium, sulfur and zinc. The B vitamins, especially B5 (pantothenic acid and B3 (niacin), are especially important for hair growth. B vitamins are important for the health and growth of the hair. Foods rich in B vitamins include beans, peas, carrots, cauliflower, soy beans, nutritional yeast, bran, nuts and eggs. Take a vitamin B-complex and supplement it with the following additional B-vitamins for best results.

Vitamin B6 is thought to prevent hair loss and help create melanin, the pigment which gives hair its color. We get Vitamin B6 by eating foods such as liver, whole grain cereals, vegetables, organ meats and egg yolks. (Keep in mind that egg yolk is not at all good for the heart patients with high cholesterol levels)

Biotin is also very important for hair health. It is needed for healthy hair and skin, and may even prevent hair loss in some men. . It is thought to help produce keratin, the building block of hair and nails. It is also thought that this vitamin may prevent greying. Good food sources of biotin include brewer's yeast, brown rice, bulgur, green peas, lentils, oats, soybeans, sunflower seeds, and walnuts. Inositol is also vital for healthy hair growth

Vitamin C is an antioxidant that helps maintain healthy hair & skin. Vitamin C aids in improving scalp circulation. It is important to maintain capillaries that carry blood to the follicles We get Vitamin C by consuming foods like citrus fruits, kiwi, pineapple, tomatoes, green peppers, potatoes and dark green vegetables.

Vitamin E increases oxygen uptake, which improves circulation to the scalp. It improves health and growth of hair. Since hair health is tied to the immune health, vitamin E is believed to stimulate hair growth by enhancing the immune function. We get Vitamin E by eating foods such as wheat germ oil, soybeans, raw seeds and nuts, dried beans and leafy green vegetables.

Vitamin A is an antioxidant that helps to produce healthy sebum (oil) in the scalp. You get Vitamin A by consuming foods such as fish liver oil, milk, meat, cheese, eggs, cabbage, carrots, spinach, broccoli, apricots and peaches. But taking large doses of vitamin A for a long period of time, can trigger hair loss. So be careful & just keep your intake of vitamin A as per advice of your doctor only.

Coenzyme Q10 : Improves scalp circulation. Increases tissue oxygenation. It is also very important for heart health.



L-Cysteine and L-methionine : These 2 amino acids believed to improve quality, texture, and growth of hair. They help prevent hair from falling out.

Zinc stimulates hair growth by enhancing immune function

Calcium is essential for healthy hair growth. You get Calcium by eating foods such as dairy, fish, nuts, lentils and sesame seeds

Copper helps prevent hair loss & defects in hair color and structure. We get copper by eating foods like shellfish, liver, green veggies, eggs, chicken & beans.

Iodine helps regulate thyroid hormones. Thyroid disease is the number one cause of disease-related hair loss. Iodine can be had from foods such as fish, seaweed, kelp, iodized salt and garlic. The recommended daily dose is 150 mcg.

Manganese prevents hair from growing too slowly. You get Manganese from foods such as eggs, whole grain cereals, avocados, beans, nuts, meat & chicken.

Silica also prevents hair loss by strengthening the hair. We get Silica from eating foods such as seafood, soybeans, rice and green vegetables.

Important : It is also important to know that after starting a vitamin and mineral supplement program, it can take up to 2 to 3 months to see results, but you will see results. So, do not become discouraged if your hair loss does not totally reverse itself after a few weeks of vitamin and mineral therapy.

As was mentioned earlier, taking more than the recommended dosage of these vitamins and minerals can have devastating consequences to your health. In addition, some supplements are not recommended for people with certain health conditions or for persons taking certain medications. So, be sure to talk with your doctor before taking any vitamins, minerals or supplements to prevent hair loss.

In addition to these few examples, there are myriads of vitamins and minerals that can help you promote hair growth and slow down the process of hair loss. To find out which ones meet your needs, talk to your doctor.

Some everyday hair loss prevention tips are given below :

- It is just essential to eat healthy foods and ensure that your body is getting the vitamins and minerals that it needs. While it is important to get enough of the right nutrients, it is just as important not to get too much of any one type of vitamin. For example, too much of vitamins A and E, have been linked to hair loss.
- Avoiding hair treatments that can damage hair; this includes bleaching, hot rollers, frequent perming, hot curling irons, and repeated brushing and combing under hot hair dryers and over exposure to the sun.
- When ever possible, avoid pulling hair into styles that require it to be pulled tight and bound with elastic for long periods of time. While hair accessories have become much more hair friendly during recent years, hairstyle such as tight ponytail, pig tails and cornrows can still do damage to the hair shaft and ultimately to the hair follicle.
- A way to pamper yourself doubles as a hair loss prevention idea. Using satin or silk pillowcases, is thought to prevent hair loss due to the fact that a silk or satin pillowcase will cause less friction while sleeping than a cotton or flannel pillowcase. This is because the head and the hair slide across the pillow instead of needing to be forcefully pushed across.



- When combing out any tangles, start from the ends of the hair and work your way up. Use spray-on conditioner all over the hair concentrating on the ends. This will also minimize any breakage.
- When the hair is wet, avoid brisk rubbing with a towel; blot the hair dry instead. Avoid vigorous combing and brushing the hair when it is wet, because its structure is more fragile then. Use a natural bristle brush, wide toothed comb, to save wear and tear.
- Shampoo regularly and while shampooing your hair, do not use finger nails on the scalp. Only apply pressure with the pads of your fingers to minimize hair loss baldness.
- Let your hair dry naturally by patting it with a towel. Rubbing hair dry with a towel can cause damage and split hair. If necessary set your blow dryer on cool and dry and only at the scalp. Let ends of the hair dry on their own. This will prevent hair ends from splitting or breaking.
- After swimming, apply a quality clarifying shampoo whose main ingredient is E.D.T.A. This will neutralize the chlorine, preventing swimmer's green color. Chlorine is can cause severe dryness in hair, use conditioner.
- Use your fingertips to massage your scalp which will increase circulation in your scalp which is important for hair growth.
- Tight fitting caps and hats will cause poor circulation in your scalp and will also cause build-up of sweat and grime.
- If you have live a high stressed life try reducing stress by taking some time out daily just to relax, excessive stress is believed to induce hair loss.
- Get enough sleep & Use a conditioner and trim any split ends.

We have already told you that even in a healthy person, it is completely normal to lose between 50 and 100 hairs from the head every day. If you feel that your hair loss issues are beyond that norm, speak with your doctor or dermatologist about your concerns. They will be able to determine if the hair loss is due to a medical or age issue, and point you in the right treatment direction.

The market is full of various offers and treatments for our hair. These may include surgeries, laser treatments, supplements, hair oils and nutrients, wigs and hair toupees, oral medications, ointments and a host of other methods. It is but advisable that we should not be tempted by any of such things. We should first know about our bodies, then the cause of our hair loss, consult your doctor and then act accordingly what is best for you. Trust yourself, your knowledge and your doctor.



Some of the common hair problems are Hair loss, thinning of hair and balding. And the responsible factors are our modern lifestyle and diet. Most hair loss sufferers seek solutions from Western medicine or turn to remedies derived from local traditions. Herbologists, however, argue that the Ayurvedic and herbal system of medicine has much to offer in dealing with hair loss conditions.

Herbs & your Hair

As per Ayurveda, if a person has vata constitution, the hairs are dark, dry, coarse, wiry or frizzy and tend to tangle easily, are prone to dullness, split ends and dandruff. The constitution comprising of Pitta has hair that is light brown, blonde or red and tend to grow grey or thin prematurely and are fine and silky with a tendency to become oily. Hairs are thick, wavy and shiny if the composition is of kapha. According to Ayurveda, however, the root causes of hair loss are :

Excess of Pitta dosha in the body is the chief **cause of hair problems**. Pitta is increased by excessive intake of tea, coffee, **alcohol, meats and smoking**.

Pitta is aggravated by eating too much fried, greasy, spicy, sour, and acidic foods.

At the same time, consumption of too many chemical medicines, low blood circulation, anaemia, general weakness, excessive exposure to dust, sunlight, water and other pollutants, too much sweating, irregular sleeping pattern, unhygienic way of living, after disease effects, stress, anxiety, and mental tension are other prime causes of hair loss. Chronic diseases like typhoid fever, presence of dandruff or lice and hormonal imbalance also cause hair loss.

Before we go any further, let us see what are the three Ayurvedic principles which must be followed to keep hair healthy :

First ; the scalp should be kept cool i.e. protection from sun and washing in cold or lukewarm water are of paramount importance.

Second ; sound nutrition, and therefore, a hair-friendly diet emphasizing proteins, iron, zinc, sulphur, Vitamin C, Vitamin B-Complex and essential fatty acids should be planned and taken.

And finally it is Oils, for example sesame and coconut, should be applied to the scalp to nourish, lubricate and strengthen the roots. This will also improve circulation to the head.

Herbal Treatments : First step is to locate the root cause in our diet or lifestyle that may be increasing the Pitta dosha. Once we locate it, try to give up or at least reduce the cause, responsible for increasing Pitta.

As most soaps and shampoos have chemicals, they might be the cause of your hair problem & hence, always use a natural shampoo or soap to clean the hair. Generally the chemicals have a heating effect, and increase Pitta locally. Amala (embilica officinalis), Shikakai (Acacia concinna) are commonly used in India for washing the hair.

Oiling and massaging of scalp is very beneficial for stopping the hair loss. Use coconut oil or mustard oil at least three times in a week. Put oil on the scalp, and massage gently in the roots of the hair.

Avoid constipation at all costs. Maintain a regular bowel movement everyday. In case of constipation, a mild natural laxative can be taken. Triphala, an Ayurvedic herbal powder, is also useful.

The diet should contain more green leafy vegetables, salads, milk, fruits & sprouts. Take more proteins, milk, buttermilk, wheat, soybean and vitamin A.

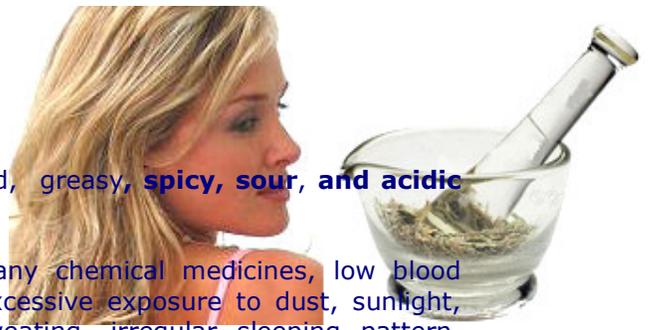
Regular physical exercise is very beneficial as it helps in balancing the aggravated doshas, keeps immune system better and blood circulation excellent.

An Ayurvedic preparation made from Bhringraj (Eclipta elba), Amala, corals, iron and black sesame seeds is quite useful, and even stops the greying of hair.

Rubbing scalp vigorously after washing the hair also helps. It increases the blood circulation, and activates the sebaceous glands.

A mixture of lettuce and spinach juice is good to drink to induce hair growth. The juice of alfalfa mixed with that of carrot and lettuce juice is also good to take.

Daily application of coconut oil mixed with lime juice on the hair is also beneficial. Applying juice of green coriander leaves on the head is also good.



Washing the hair with a paste of cooked Urad dal (black beans) and fenugreek (methi) 2-3 times a week, is also good.

Regular cleaning and brushing the hair is very important. When the hairs are brushed, oil-producing glands get stimulated and this natural oil makes the hair glossy and healthy. To give extra shine to the hair, after washing rinse the hair with some lemon juice mixed in a cup of warm water.

Some other hair problems and remedies are as under :

Dandruff : Dry skin flaking off the scalp and itchiness is referred to as dandruff. The aggravation of Vata generally causes this dryness.

Remedies : 1) Add 1 teaspoon of camphor to half a cup of coconut or neem oil. Store it in glass container. 2) Mix 1 teaspoon of castor, mustard and coconut oil each and massage into the scalp. 3) Mix one part of lemon juice with two parts of coconut oil.

Start with any one of the three remedies above. Massage into the roots of the hair regularly at night. Wash with warm water after three to four hours or leave overnight.

Premature Greying : Greying of hair is a natural process that happens with increasing age, but if the hair starts greying before the age of 35, it is termed as premature greying that occurs due to the aggravation of Pitta dosha. Excessive intake of tea, coffee, alcohol, meat, fried, oily, greasy, spicy, sour, and acidic foods increases pitta and leads to greying prematurely.

Remedies : 1) Apply a paste made from 2-Tsp. henna powder, 1-tsp. curd, 1-tsp. fenugreek seed powder, 1 tbsp. coffee, 2-tbsp. mint juice and 2-tbsp. basil juice. Apply this paste to the hair for two hours. For a darker colour, leave this paste in for 3 to 4 hours. Wash hair with any natural shampoo. 2) Grate some fresh ginger. Mix with honey and place it in a jar. Eat 1 tea spoon everyday.



Itchy Scalp : Aggravation of Pitta dosha, stress, allergic reaction to shampoo, air conditioning, pollution and central heating lead to an itchy and red scalp, with tiny pimples or sores, dull and dry hair.

Remedies : 1) Add 1 teaspoon of camphor to half a cup of coconut oil and store it in glass container. Massage this oil into the scalp before bed. 2) Grind some jasmine roots with lime juice. Wash the hair and scalp with it.

Aromatherapy : Besides herbal and ayurvedic remedies, aromatherapy also has a lot to get good results for hair problems. The results of one research study suggest that the essential oils of thyme, rosemary, lavender, and cedarwood mixed with an oil and applied on the areas of hair loss may stimulate hair growth. This double blind, placebo-controlled study enrolled 84 people who massaged either these essential oils or a non-treatment oil into their scalps each night for seven months. Results showed that 44% of people in the treatment group had new hair growth compared to only 15% in the control group.

Hair Oil Recipe

3 drops of essential oil of thyme
3 drops of essential oil of lavender
3 drops of essential oil of rosemary
3 drops of essential oil of cedar-wood

1/8 cup of grape-seed oil
1/8 cup of jojoba oil

Mix the ingredients together. Cover your pillow with an old towel. Apply several drops of the mixture to areas of hair loss each night, massaging gently into scalp for 3-5 minutes. Store the oil tightly covered. Do not take internally or near the eye area.

Conclusion : Dear readers, by now, you have read many articles on various diseases written by me in various newspapers and on this website. Have you noticed one thing which is common among all the articles? This is our life style responsible for most of our diseases thus making our lives miserable.

You must have been watching various programmes over the television, listening to various radio programmes on medicine, and reading a number of articles in the newspapers and health magazine and of course, browsing internet. And one thing you could understand is ; your life style.

In our routine, the more we are getting comfortable, the more we are getting prone to diseases. All diseases like Cardiovascular (Heart related) or Neuro (Brain related), kidney problems or diabetes, migraines or hair loss, male sexual dysfunctions or female sexual problems, arthritis or general weakness or a number of others, are all the result of our lethargy, change in life style, not taking proper diet and exercise, not being honest to our body and soul needs and getting more and more involved in making money but not been able to enjoy it.

What to do then? The conclusion these days is simple, collective and only one; change our habits and life style. Regular exercise, morning walks or gym, going to bed earlier and rising earlier too, denial of junk food and consumption of balanced diet, positive outlook towards life, love towards family, friends and neighbours, etc. can make us healthier which would be good for our lives and the lives of others related to us as well as the society as a whole.

One more thing. Try to be as natural as possible. Believe more in home remedies, herbal system and of course, trust yourself. Simply not only read such article, but try to bring them into practice and become healthy, only then I will think that my mission is complete. And finally, whether it is modern medicine, or yoga, herbal or others, always take the medicine under the advice and guidance of a qualified practitioner only. Thanks.

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(Sources: Richard Metchell, Ayurveda-herbal-remedy website, John Mencini ,medicalindia.org, Ayurved Neghantu, Rose Lenk / Dr. R. Arora, MD, Ph.D / Hairatoz and hairlosshelp dot com)



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