

## **Premature Graying of Hair**

The hair has a tendency to lose its natural color with advancing age. It is therefore natural for the hair to turn grey with age. But premature graying is a morbid condition and it makes even the young look older. This causes a great deal of concern to affected persons, especially women. The hair is an appendage of the skin. It is composed of the same kind of cells as are found in the outer layer of the skin, known as epidermis. It grows from a hair follicle which is a deep recess in the epidermis. The sebaceous glands of the scalp secrete an oily substance called sebum, which is the source of nutrition, luster and blackness of the hair. The hair cannot be fed externally, for such nourishment as the scalp requires must come to it from the bloodstream.

### **Treatment**

Diet is of utmost importance in the prevention and treatment of premature graying of hair and persons suffering from this disorder should take a diet rich in all essential nutrients. The vitamins considered useful in premature graying of hair are pantothenic acid, para-aminobenzoic acid or PABA and inositol. The minimum daily requirement of these vitamins appears to be 10 mg. of pantothenic acid, 100 gm. of para-aminobenzoic acid and 2000 mg. of inositol. To obtain satisfactory results, all three of these vitamins, belonging to B group, should be supplied at one time preferably in a form which gives all B vitamins, such as yeast, wheat germ and liver. The three anti-grey hair vitamins can be produced in the intestinal tract by bacteria. Thus drinking a liter of yogurt daily with a tablespoon of yeast before each meal will be an excellent remedy for the prevention and treatment of premature graying of hair. If one wishes to take tablets of calcium pantothenate and paba, they should be taken in addition to the yeast and yogurt and not as a substitute for them.

Gayelord Hauser, one of the best known world nutritionists, in his book 'The New Diet Does it', claims that this treatment will restore the grey hair back to its natural color. He also advises addition of iron and iodine in the form of sea food, to an otherwise adequate diet for obtaining better results. Besides fish, which is the main source of iodine, the requirement of this mineral can be met by adequate intake of carrots, bananas and similar other vegetables and fruits. Carrots are especially useful in furnishing fresh blood and maintaining the health of the hair.

### **Home remedies**

Certain home remedies have been found useful in the prevention and treatment of premature graying of hair. The foremost among these is the use of Indian gooseberry or amla which is a valuable hair tonic for enriching hair growth and hair pigmentation. The fruit, cut into pieces, should be dried, preferably in the shade. These pieces should be boiled in coconut oil till the solid matter become little charred dust. This darkish oil is very useful in preventing graying. The water in which dried amla pieces are soaked overnight is Indian gooseberry (amla) is

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considered highly beneficial in the treatment of premature graying of hair. Also nourishing to the hair. This water should be used for the last rinse while washing the hair. Massaging the scalp with a teaspoonful of amla juice mixed with a teaspoonful of almond oil or few drops of lime juice, every night has proved beneficial in the prevention and treatment of premature graying of hair.

Liberal intake of curry leaves is considered beneficial in preventing premature graying of hair. These have the property to give vitality and strength to hair roots. New hair roots that grow are healthier with normal pigment. The leaves can be used in the form of chutney or these may be squeezed in butter- milk or lassi. When the leaves are boiled in coconut oil, the oil forms an excellent hair tonic to stimulate hair growth and bring back hair pigmentation. The butter made from cow's milk has the property to prevent premature graying of hair. A small roll may be taken internally and a little quantity may be massaged into the hair root twice a week. Ribbed gourd, known as torai in the vernacular, boiled in coconut oil is another effective remedy for premature graying of hair. Pieces of this vegetable should be dried in the shade. These dried pieces should be soaked in coconut oil and kept aside for three or four days. The oil should then be boiled till the solid is reduced to a blackened residue. This oil should be massaged into the scalp. It will help enrich the hair roots and restore pigment to the hair.

### ***Hair Dye***

The paste of henna leaves, boiled in coconut oil to get a darkish oil, can be used as a hair dye to blacken grey hair. The paste itself can be applied to the hair and washed away after a few hours to dye the grey hair. Washing the hair with concentrated tea extract twice a week is also considered useful in coloring grey hair to brown or black.

### ***Reference***

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.