

The Healthy Hair Guide
By Doctor Aileen Alexander

for
PURDEY

The secret to strong, long and healthy hair. HINT: it's got nothing to do with spending £££ on supplements.

I'm Dr Aileen - Medical Doctor, Nutritionist & Lifestyle Coach.

I've devoted my career to helping busy professional women become the healthiest and happiest version of themselves.

My job here, is to share my 3 pillars to strong long and healthy hair.

You see, the condition of your hair isn't just a reflection of aesthetic beauty, it's also a marker of health.

If you take your health seriously, your locks will follow.

Pillar 1 - sleep well

I've always said that sleep is the pillar of health.

When we sleep it contributes to key functions such as brain development, cellular repair, memory formation, hormone production, immune function and sugar metabolism.

When we have a bad night's sleep, the hormone that makes us hungry, ghrelin, rises. On the other hand, the hormone that tells us we are full, leptin, drops.

This mismatch stimulates our appetite and causes us to crave carb and sugar rich foods causing us to over consume low quality foods.

That means you're going to be grabbing chocolate at the expense of the nutrients your hair needs.

Lack of sleep will also affect your bodies ability to repair itself and that'll have an impact on the quality of your locks.

The average person requires 8 hours of good quality sleep at night.

Scientifically proven methods of maximising your sleep include reducing screen time at night, having a daily wind down routine at the same time, cutting down on caffeine in the afternoon and making sure your bedroom is of your preferred temperature and lighting.

Simple, right?

Pillar 2 - manage your stress

Dating back to caveman days, your body has a natural response to stressors which primes us to be in the optimum state for running away or fighting.

In our 21st century modern life our stress response is overactivated.

An email from work, no space in the carpark or running late feels like a threat on a hormonal level.

When you are stressed, your energy is redirected to your vital organs, where it's needed the most.

Your hair is not a vital organ and therefore, when stressed, energy is diverted away from hair growth, leaving it to become brittle or fall out.

As a double whammy - when you're in a high energy state you're more likely to grab opt high carb and sugary foods, which will fuel your body quickly but not provide the quality of nutrition that your hair craves.

Popular ways of trying to reduce stress levels include planning ahead of time, reframing your mindset, coaching, mindfulness, exercise and more.

There isn't a one size fits all and downward dogs and meditation feel out of reach for many women living in the real world today(!)

Pillar 3 - eat a balanced diet of whole foods first

Your body will profit from a wide range of essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals needed to support good hair growth.

There is no magical "super food" for hair growth.

In fact, the term "superfood" is an unprotected label as opposed to a medical claim.

Your hair is mostly made from protein, so you must eat more protein for strong hair.

Protein can be found in multiple whole foods including meats, eggs, beans and nuts and we would recommend that you try to add a source of protein to every meal.

Protein also keeps you fuller for longer so you're less likely to crash and reach for the nearest sugar hit, win win!

Iron, zinc and vitamin C are other very important minerals used in the hair cycle which can be found in many food groups such as red meats, fruits and veggies.

Don't worry too much about which fruits or which veggies you should be eating.

Instead aim for a rainbow plate. The different colours represent different vitamins and minerals (also known as micronutrients).

& supplements are not the answer here.

The supplement industry is poorly regulated and many supplements, for example vitamin C, are poorly absorbed and excreted in urine.

Yep, you're just paying for expensive pee.

I'd always encourage you to get your vitamins from whole food sources where possible. That means out of the ground, from an animal or off a tree.

It's what it says on the tin. Wholefood is literally whole and hasn't been processed.

Eating in a regular meal pattern helps us to keep our nutrition organised, including eating breakfast which helps to supply energy to your body and hair early in the day.

Lastly, it is important to drink lots of water to avoid scalp dehydration so hairs have an optimal base to grow on.

If you found this helpful and would like to know more about scalp and hair health, book an appointment to see one of our hair and scalp specialists now.

www.purdeyhairstylist.com/hair-loss