

The Integumentary System - Part 2

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Dietary Recommendations for Healthy Skin, Hair and Nails

- For dry, itchy skin, or hang nails, try increasing your daily water intake
- Eat fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, for a healthy dose of omega-3's, iron and B12 which slows hair loss
- Nuts have lots of zinc, good for slowing hair loss and thinning hair. Walnuts in particular also contain selenium, which is needed for the health of your scalp. Almonds contain fatty acids which are good for your hair, nails and skin.
- Legumes contain iron, zinc and protein, which is an important building block for hair. In addition contain biotin (B7), which can improve the hair's strength against breakages.
- Flax seed consumed daily hardens nails and helps them to grow faster.
- For skin problems such as psoriasis and eczema, look for food triggers. Popular ones are gluten and dairy. Try removing these foods from your diet for 3 weeks and see if there's any difference. For more severe cases, you may need to remove food for 45 days. Reintroduce food 1 at a time and note your reaction.

Healthy Skin

Herbal Applications for the Skin:

Creams	Lotions
Oils	Salves
Poultices	Compresses
Plasters	Powders
Liniments	Washes
Baths	Soaks

Caster Oil
Activated Charcoal

Herbal Remedies for the Skin

Herbal remedies include both internal and external applications, depending on the affliction. Many times, using both internal and external remedies is the ideal approach.

Nourishing from the inside

Infusions

Many times, skin issues are not just skin deep. Nourishing herbal infusions provide many vitamins and minerals the skin/body may be lacking and also support healing.

To make an infusion: Add 1/2 oz. dried herb to 1 quart jar. Fill with boiling water. Steep for 8 hours. Strain. Your infusion is now ready to use. You can chill it, heat it or drink it room temperature. Store unused infusion in the refrigerator and drink w/in 48 hours.

Herbs to infuse for the skin include:

Calendula
Chickweed
Elderflower
Nettles
Oatstraw
Plantain
Violet

Gut Healing Tea*

Often chronic skin issues are rooted in the gut and/or liver. This tea should be drank daily for several months to help heal the gut, along with dietary changes. This tea alone will not heal the gut but when combined with a better diet, will do wonders.

Combine equal parts:

Calendula, Plantain, Mint, Chamomile, Marshmallow leaf, Ginger, Fennel, Yarrow
Store in a glass jar.

To make a tea: 1 tablespoon for 8 oz hot water. Steep 15 minutes.
Drink 1 - 3 cups per day.

Healing from the outside

All Purpose "Green" Oil/Salve*

A Green oil/salve is typically made from herbs that have an affinity for the skin. It offers a wide range of uses from treating cuts, bruises, burns, sprains, blisters, dry skin and insect stings.

To make an oil, add freshly wilted or dried herbs to a double boiler or crock pot and cover with oil. Olive oil is a great all purpose oil but other oils can be used based on their medicinal value. Gently heat, you do not want the herbs to boil, for 2 - 3 hours or longer until the oil takes on the properties and coloration of the herbs. The herbs will look 'spent.'

Once the oil is finished, strain off the herbs.

Measure your oil. To make a salve, add 1 oz beeswax for every 8 oz oil.

Add a pinch of slippery elm powder or some vitamin E oil to the mix to help preserve the salve. Melt in a double boiler or crock pot and pour into wide mouthed jars.

Herbs to use for Green oil/salve (any combination or singly):

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)
Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*)
Plantain (*Plantago spp.*)
Self Heal / Heal All (*Prunella vulgaris*)

Healthy Hair

Herbal Applications for the Hair:

Conditioners
Rinses

Oils
Teas (internally)

Herbal Remedies for the Hair

Hair is best nourished from the inside. Often by adjusting your diet, your hair can be healed. This nourishment can be supported on the outside by using herbally infused oils and hair rinses.

Nourishing from the inside

Infusions

Nettles
Horsetail

Nourishing from the outside

Dry scalp

Burdock seed infused oil massaged into scalp

Brittle hair

Coconut oil
Hempseed oil
Jojoba oil

Hair Rinse

Rosemary - darkens grey hair
Chamomile - brightens light hair
Nettles - all hair types

Healthy Nails

Herbal Applications for the Nails:

Soaks
Creams

Oils
Teas (internally)

Herbal Remedies for the Nails

Brittle nails can be a sign of anemia, hypothyroidism or poor nutrition. Increase iron rich foods, as well as foods high in magnesium and calcium. Nettles infusion is also a great way to support the thyroid, increase your vitamin and mineral intake and helps to strengthen nails. If you have other symptoms of thyroid problems, have your thyroid checked.

Nourishing from the inside

Infusions

(See hair for instructions on preparing infusions)

Nettles

Horsetail

Nourishing from the outside

Oil treatment

Soak nails 10 minutes daily in herbally infused oils.

Herbs to infuse with olive oil, argan, coconut, jojoba or hempseed oil:

Nettles

Burdock root

Rosemary

Nail Cream*

Based on Rosemary Gladstar's perfect cream recipe. Makes ~ 4 oz.

1 oz sweet almond oil

1 oz olive oil

2.75 oz water

1/8 oz beeswax

1/4 teaspoon borax

Combine oils and infuse with herbs. Infuse water with herbs (separately from oil). Strain off the herbs from both. Add the borax to the water. Begin blending oil with stick blender and slowly add water until completely combined.

Fungal soak

Athlete's foot is highly contagious. When trimming affected nails, be sure to sterilize (rubbing alcohol is fine) before clipping unaffected nails or the fungus will spread to other nails.

2 T. Calendula flower petals

2 T. Peppermint leaf

2 T. Horsetail

1 T. Lavender

1 T. Eucalyptus

1 T. Bay Laurel

Buy 1 quart cheap apple cider vinegar. Raw ACV is not necessary for this. Pour into a stainless steel pot and heat until ready to boil. Turn off and add in the herbs. Steep for 8 hours. Strain off the herbs and pour into a plastic shoe box.

Daily for 2 months, soak feet and/or hands for 5 minutes. Save the liquid and reuse. Cover with the lid when not in use.

Resources for Herbs:

Local:

Green Earth Grocery in Edwardsville, Illinois

Highland Nutrition in Highland, Illinois

Cheryl's Herbs in Maplewood, Missouri

Online:

Missouri Herbs <http://missouriherbs.com/>

Mountain Rose Herbs <http://www.mountainroseherbs.com/index.php?AID=113760>

Moonwise Herbs <http://moonwiseherbs.com/store/>

Blessed Maine Herb Farm <http://blessedmaineherbs.com/>

Pacific Botanicals <http://pacificbotanicals.com/>

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