Caring for Scalp Psoriasis

by CIENA NELSON

Consider These Remedies for Scalp Psoriasis

When I was younger I had patches of psoriasis all over my head, behind my ears, and on my nails. I was painfully aware of people staring down at my nails for what seemed like decades, but my scalp psoriasis tended to bother me more.

I would lose hair in patches that I couldn't help but pick at, and I would bleed behind my ears near my hairline. I didn't want to put my hair up for fear of people seeing what was behind my ears.

I recall there was a foam my dermatologist prescribed that worked pretty well to spot-treat my scalp — although it burned like most topicals — and a couple of bright orange shampoos that seemed to do the trick.

I no longer have scalp psoriasis and I've switched to using all-natural shampoo and conditioner (as I have with most other body products). I don't think the two are related though, as the patches on my scalp went away prior to the time I began using these products and I still have flare-ups behind my ears from time to time.

Natural Remedies for Scalp Psoriasis

A lot has changed since I last struggled with scalp psoriasis. I've noticed new and different treatments have become available, as well as home remedies people try and then post about on social media.

Henna and tea tree oil are some I've heard of, but when I was younger I had bad experiences with tea tree oil, and Henna I have just yet to try for no reason in particular.

One remedy I would most certainly try would be coconut oil for scalp psoriasis, if the patches returned. I use coconut oil to cook with, as body oil, and I put raw coconut in my daily smoothies.

Since introducing both coconut and flax oil into my diet I have noticed a significant difference in my hair and skin health. Although I do not believe coconut oil alone could remedy scalp psoriasis, it seems as though people use it as a sort of hair and scalp mask, in order to get maximum hydration.

As far as precautionary measures go, I would always advise testing anything on a small area of your skin or scalp before using it all over.

Choosing Your Skin Care Products

Having had eczema and psoriasis my whole life, I'm used to gingerly choosing what products I use and where. I grew up using the same lotions and hair care as everyone else and they would without fail sting and burn.

It wasn't until I was older that I realized how many ingredients in our beauty products are truly harmful. In fact, I

always advise everyone I know (psoriasis sufferer or not) to look into using natural products.

Once you do your research, it is scary how many products in the U.S. contain dangerous and harmful ingredients that are banned in other countries. Even the water that comes from our showers makes my skin severely dry and I believe it to be from the chlorine and other “cleaning agents” that are added to our water (a way to circumvent this is to use a shower filter on your showerhead).

Tips for Managing Scalp Psoriasis

Lastly, I wanted to share some tips and tricks that I found helpful when I was trying my best to manage my scalp psoriasis.

- With patches on the scalp, it can be extremely itchy and dry, but try your best not to pick!
- I found it helpful to remove build-up before applying medicated shampoos by moisturizing so the plaques were easily removed without force.
- Moisturizing and conditioning is very important! I would sometimes condition multiple times after shampooing.
- Make sure that while you are applying your medication, you get it directly on the spots that need it — sometimes I thought I was applying it to my scalp but really it was getting in my hair.
- Being gentle with plaques (anywhere on your body) is incredibly important, as I’ve found that being too rough, scratching, or picking can actually make the skin flare-up more.
- Perhaps the biggest tip I can share would be to avoid mint shampoo — I made the mistake of using it a couple of times without paying attention and it burned like nobody’s business!
- Blow drying hair can exacerbate the issue causing dryness of the scalp as well.

Overall, be gentle and patient with yourself! As frustrating as psoriasis can be, it is an autoimmune disease that will get worse the more stressed out you get about having it, and the more you pick and prod.

Meditation helps in times of extreme frustration or impatience, and maintaining a healthy, balanced lifestyle in general will aid in the process of managing it.