

**- Hair**

## Tips to deal with dandruff

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DANDRUFF is a common chronic scalp condition marked by flaking of the skin on your scalp. It isn't contagious or serious, but it can be embarrassing, and sometimes difficult to treat. The good news is dandruff can usually be controlled. Mild cases of dandruff may need nothing more than daily shampooing with a gentle cleanser.



Stubborn cases of dandruff often respond to medicated shampoos. In addition to regular shampooing, you can take steps to reduce your risk of developing dandruff:

### Learn to manage stress

Stress affects your overall health, making you susceptible to a number of conditions and diseases. It can even help trigger dandruff or worsen existing symptoms.

### Shampoo often

If you tend to have an oily scalp, daily shampooing may help prevent dandruff.

### Get a little sun

Sunlight may be good for dandruff. But because exposure to ultraviolet light damages your skin and increases your risk of skin cancer, don't sunbathe. Instead, just spend a little time outdoors. And be sure to wear sunscreen on your face and body.

### Alternative medicine

Small studies have found that tea tree oil can reduce dandruff, but more study is needed.

Tea tree oil, which comes from the leaves of the Australian tea tree (*Melaleuca alternifolia*), has been used for centuries as an antiseptic, antibiotic and antifungal agent.

The oil may cause allergic reactions in some people. When regular shampoos fail, dandruff shampoos you can buy at a pharmacy may succeed.

But dandruff shampoos aren't alike, and you may need to experiment until you find one that works for you. If you develop itching or burning from any product, stop using it. If you develop an allergic reaction – such as a rash, or breathing difficulty – seek immediate medical attention. Dandruff shampoos are classified according to the medication they contain: Pyridithione zinc shampoos These contain the antibacterial and antifungal agent zinc pyridithione. This type of shampoo can reduce the fungus on your scalp that can cause dandruff and seborrhoeic dermatitis.

### Shampoos containing salicylic acid

These “scalp scrubs” help eliminate scale, but they may leave your scalp dry, leading to more flaking. Using a conditioner after shampooing can help relieve dryness.

### Selenium sulphide shampoos

These shampoos slow your skin cells from dying and may reduce malassezia (a fungus). Because they can discolour blond, grey or chemically coloured hair, be sure to use them only as directed, and rinse well after shampooing.

Ketoconazole shampoos Ketoconazole is a broadspectrum antifungal agent that may work when other shampoos fail. It's available over the counter, as well as by prescription.

Try using one of these shampoos daily or every other day until your dandruff is controlled; then cut back to two or three times a week as needed. If one type of shampoo works for a time and then seems to lose its effectiveness, try alternating between two types of dandruff shampoos.

Read and follow the directions on each bottle of shampoo you try. Some need to be left on for a few minutes, while others should be immediately rinsed off.

If you've shampooed faithfully for several weeks and there's still a dusting of dandruff on your shoulders, talk to your doctor or dermatologist. You may need a prescription-strength shampoo or treatment with a steroid lotion. – Mayo Clinic News Network/ Tribune News Service