

PREVENTION

16 Foods Experts Say Help Your Hair Grow Longer and Stronger

Discover the nutrients that keep your hair healthy.

By Shannen Zitz, Korin Miller Updated: Jul 28, 2026

No matter how thick your hair is when you're young or how many treatments and products you apply, it's likely that you'll experience some hair loss and thinning as you get older. Hair growth slows with age too, according to the National Library of Medicine. But providing your body with the nutrients it needs to help your hair grow by filling your plate with the best foods for hair growth can help you maintain longer and stronger strands.

"Your hair's health is built from the nutrients you eat, so if your diet is lacking the proper nutrients it needs, it shows," said Asmi Berry, D.O., a board-certified dermatologist at BHSkin Dermatology in Los Angeles. Gary Goldenberg, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist practicing in New York City, agreed. "Start with a nutrient-rich diet emphasizing whole foods like lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats," he said.

Meet the Experts: Asmi Berry, D.O., a board-certified dermatologist at BHSkin Dermatology in Los Angeles; Gary Goldenberg, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist practicing in New York City; Keri Gans, M.S., R.D., a registered dietitian and author of The Small Change Diet; Melissa Mroz-Planells, D.C.N., R.D.N., national media spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and member of the Prevention Medical Review Board.

If you want to get more specific, the three most important vitamins for healthy hair growth are vitamins A, C, and B7 (biotin), said Melissa Mroz-Planells, D.C.N., R.D.N., a national media spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and member of the Prevention Medical Review Board. "Vitamin A helps hair grow and is used to produce an oil called sebum, which moisturizes the hair and scalp. Vitamin C is used to make collagen, which is important to the production of keratin. Biotin is a B vitamin that can help support hair growth," she explained. Dr. Goldenberg also highlighted vitamins B12, D, and E, iron, zinc, and omega-3 fatty acids. These nutrients "play a key role in cell growth, reducing inflammation, and maintaining follicle strength," he said. Protein is a crucial nutrient to focus on, too. "Protein is key because hair is mostly made of keratin, a

protein. If you are not getting enough, hair growth slows down, strands weaken, and shedding increases,” Dr. Berry said.

In fact, deficiencies in any of these nutrients may lead to thinner, weaker hair. “When your body is missing key nutrients, it prioritizes essential organs over hair growth. This can lead to hair shedding, brittleness, and slow regrowth,” explained Dr. Berry. “Low iron, protein, or zinc can cause thinning, breakage, and even hair loss conditions, like telogen effluvium. With telogen effluvium, there is excessive hair shedding due to stress or vitamin deficiencies.” The good news, she added, is that once you increase your intake of these nutrients, hair will often grow back.

If you’ve noticed that your hair isn’t growing as fast or as thickly as it used to, make an appointment with a dermatologist to see if there’s an underlying cause of hair loss that needs addressing. And in the meantime, consider adding some of these tasty foods to your diet—they’re packed with the nutrients above and may help stimulate hair growth.

Best foods to boost hair growth

Strawberries

Strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C, said Keri Gans, M.S., R.D., a registered dietitian and author of *The Small Change Diet*. “Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant with anti-inflammatory properties that may help increase blood flow through our body, including our scalp, and hair follicles are stimulated—supporting the growth of our hair,” she explained.

Egg yolks

Egg yolks are a good source of biotin, which has long been associated with hair growth, said Gans. “Specifically, biotin helps produce keratin, a naturally occurring protein in your body that helps form hair,” she explained.

Lentils

Plant-based lentils deliver iron, which helps to transport oxygen to the cells in our body, said Gans. “When someone is iron deficient, also known as anemic, it is not uncommon to see hair loss,” she noted, so making sure you’re getting enough iron may help support growth.

Fatty fish

Fatty fish (i.e., salmon, herring, mackerel) are good sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which Dr. Berry said “reduce scalp inflammation and help with hydration and shine.” Fatty fish are also protein-rich and contain selenium, vitamin B, and vitamin D. Selenium, a trace mineral, helps regulate thyroid hormone levels and plays a role in limiting oxidative stress on the hair follicle, said Dr. Berry. Meanwhile, vitamin D “has been linked to new hair follicle stimulation,” Dr. Berry added, noting that those with low levels of vitamin D often struggle with hair thinning.

Spinach

Spinach is a leafy green vegetable that contains iron, vitamin A, folate, and vitamin C. Iron “helps carry oxygen to hair follicles,” explained Dr. Berry, who added that low levels of iron can cause excessive hair shedding. Additionally, folate, a B vitamin, is “essential for keratin production and healthy hair growth,” she said.

While vitamin A is important for scalp health, it is important to note that an excess of vitamin A may actually impair hair growth and lead to increased hair loss, according to Harvard Medical School (the same is true of selenium).

Sweet potatoes

Sweet potatoes are high in vitamin A, biotin, and some vitamin C, said Mroz-Planells, all of which are known to boost your hair growth. Plus, they are full of flavor and make for a great addition to a well-rounded plate.

Carrots

Like sweet potatoes, carrots are high in vitamin A and vitamin C, said Mroz-Planells. These orange foods also contain carotenoids, which have been shown to protect against UV damage and help improve skin elasticity, hydration, and texture—win-win for healthy hair and glowing skin!

Broccoli

Broccoli delivers the same key vitamins, along with biotin, noted Mroz-Planells. With scalp-boosting vitamins A and C, along with keratin-producing biotin, this tasty green vegetable is sure to support healthy hair growth.

Plain yogurt

Rich in biotin and vitamin A, plain yogurt can help support hair growth, Mroz-Planells said. Top it with some berries and some nuts, and you've got yourself a healthy hair-boosting breakfast!

Red bell peppers

Red bell peppers are high in vitamin C and vitamin A, said Mroz-Planells. With vitamin C's important role in collagen production, and vitamin A's role in sebum production, both vitamins do wonders for your scalp health.

Avocados

It turns out avocado toast or a serving of guacamole might just help you on your hair growth journey. Dr. Berry said this fruit is rich in biotin and healthy fats, which are both known to bolster hair growth and contribute to healthier, shinier hair.

Oysters

Oysters are rich in zinc, "which helps with tissue repair and prevents hair follicle weakening," said Dr. Berry. They are also an excellent source of protein and contain vitamin B12.

Beans

Beans, such as black beans, kidney beans, and garbanzo beans, contain high levels of nutrients like protein, iron, zinc, biotin, and folate, which our experts explained are all essential for healthy hair follicles and scalp circulation.

Chicken

Lean meats like chicken supply high-quality protein. "That's essential for keratin formation, along with iron, which is essential for hair health and growth," Dr. Goldenberg said. He also pointed out that iron deficiencies are common, especially in women—and this can lead to hair shedding.

Almonds

These powerhouse nuts are rich in vitamin E, an antioxidant that protects against damage, Dr. Goldenberg said. "Almonds also have biotin to aid keratin production and magnesium to strengthen follicles, promoting faster, healthier growth and reducing breakage," he added.

Walnuts

Walnuts are another nut that's great for hair and scalp health. "Walnuts provide omega-3 fatty acids to nourish the scalp, reduce inflammation, and improve circulation," Dr. Goldenberg said. They also contain biotin and antioxidants to help fortify follicles and minimize oxidative stress, supporting thicker, shinier hair, he pointed out.

Other ways to make your hair grow faster

When it comes to growing your hair faster, "eating well is a great start," said Dr. Berry. "But a holistic approach will help you achieve the best results." Here are some other smart strategies to help stimulate hair growth.

Pay close attention to scalp care. "Regular scalp massages, gentle cleansing, and exfoliation can improve circulation and create a healthier environment for hair growth," said Dr. Berry. She also recommended using a scalp mask to soothe and nourish the scalp, which may boost hair growth by creating an optimal environment for the hair follicles to thrive.

Manage stress levels. "Chronic stress pushes hair follicles into the resting phase of hair growth, which can lead to shedding and slow regrowth," Dr. Berry explained. "I recommend patients try exercise, meditation, and good sleep."

Be gentle on your hair. If your goal is to grow your hair faster, try to limit treatments that can damage it or cause breakage. Dr. Berry advised patients to limit heat and chemical damage from things like excessive heat styling, bleaching, or harsh hair treatments, which can all break and thin the hair. "Always use a heat protectant spray before styling!" she added.

Stay hydrated. "Dehydration can lead to brittle strands and slower growth, as well as increase inflammation," Dr. Goldenberg said. On the flip side, drinking enough water helps create an environment that supports hair growth. "Hydration maintains scalp moisture to prevent dryness and breakage, and enhances overall blood flow for optimal growth," Dr. Goldenberg added.

SOURCE: <https://www.prevention.com/food-nutrition/g73267434/foods-for-hair-growth-guide/>