

Dandruff or seborrheic dermatitis — How do you tell?

(NC)—Dandruff results from the scalp's skin cell life cycle being too rapid; leading to the shedding of cells in large clusters producing those noticeable scales and flakes. It is so common that it is considered normal, but not appealing. The scalp is normally inhabited by a fungus called *Malassezia furfur*, however in some susceptible individuals, the presence of this fungus causes skin irritation which explains the itching sometimes felt by people afflicted by dandruff. The response of skin to this irritation is to accelerate the noninflammatory turnover of cells producing dandruff.

Treatment and prevention for dandruff ranges from daily use of regular shampoos to over-the-counter dandruff and/or prescription medicated shampoo alternatives.

Seborrheic Dermatitis (SD) is a non-contagious, chronic, inherited condition characterized by periods of increasing and decreasing severity that causes flaking and redness of the skin. It can appear as greasy, thick, white to yellowish crusting (scales) and is associated with inflammation in areas of the skin where sebaceous (skin oil) glands are concentrated. It usually appears on the scalp, but sometimes patches can appear on other parts of the body, such as the face and chest, eyebrows, eyelids, the ears, the forehead, navel, groin, breasts and the chin. In babies it's known as "cradle cap."

The incidence of SD tends to increase with stress and with cold, dry winter months for the 3% of the population who may be affected. While it can be treated and controlled, it cannot be permanently cured. Treatment requires patience and can last many months until the scaling subsides.

When treating SD of the scalp, effective treatment should have anti-fungal activity against *Malassezia furfur*. In addition, since SD is a chronic condition requiring constant and frequent treatment, any medicated shampoo choice should also provide cosmetic appeal such as a pleasant scent, good lathering properties and a conditioner to leave hair soft, manageable and healthy-looking.

When dandruff is persistent or seborrheic dermatitis is a problem, ask your doctor or dermatologist about Stieprox, a prescription shampoo available from Stiefel Canada. This new shampoo contains a proven anti-fungal with demonstrated clinical effectiveness and safety for dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis conditions.

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Photo available at www.sxc.hu

Why put up with dandruff...when you don't have to?

(NC)—Is dandruff getting you down or are you tired of flicking flecks off your shoulders or that dry, itchy feeling of your scalp? If so, you are like 70% of the population who have to deal with various degrees of dandruff on a routine basis. Dandruff results from the scalp's skin cell life cycle being too rapid; leading to the shedding of cells in large clusters producing those noticeable scales. The scalp is normally inhabited by a fungus called *Malassezia furfur*, however in some susceptible individuals, the presence of this fungus causes skin irritation which explains the itching sometimes felt by people afflicted by dandruff. The response of skin to this irritation is to accelerate the turnover of cells. Some external contributors to dandruff may include infrequent shampooing of the hair or inadequate hair rinsing, improper use of hair-coloring products, cold weather, dry environment and tight fitting hats.

Dandruff can disappear suddenly without treatment or may take multiple weeks of treatment to improve. Treatment

and prevention for mild dandruff ranges from daily use of regular shampoos to over-the-counter dandruff shampoos containing coal tar, pyrithione zinc, salicylic acid or selenium sulfide. But what happens when these do not work and dandruff persists?

This means you may have stubborn, more severe dandruff. And if you have yellow-red crusting (scales) appearing along the hairline, behind the ears, in the external auditory canals, on the eye brows, and on the bridge of the nose, you may have seborrheic dermatitis. In this case, the crusty scales are often oily, accompanied by a red, itchy scalp. Seborrheic dermatitis tends to flare up with stress and with the cold, dry winter months.

An effective option for these stubborn cases is stronger anti-dandruff shampoos available by prescription from your doctor. An ideal product should be effective against the fungus *Malassezia furfur*; rapidly relieve dandruff; have cosmetic appeal such as a pleasant scent and good lathering characteristics; and contain

conditioners to leave hair soft, manageable and healthy-looking. There's one such prescription shampoo available from Stiefel Canada called Stieprox. This new shampoo contains a proven anti-fungal and was demonstrated to be clinically effective and safe for dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis conditions.

Some general tips for dealing with dandruff:

- Shampoo regularly with a mild non-medicated shampoo such as a baby shampoo will help limit dandruff. A strong shampoo can cause scalp irritation and will only exacerbate your dandruff condition.
- If your condition warrants it, an antidandruff shampoo should be used. Make sure to follow the instructions and dosage written on the package.
- If your scalp condition does not improve within 2 weeks of this regimen, talk to your doctor because if over-the-counter shampoos don't seem to work, your doctor may prescribe a medicated shampoo that could be right for you.

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Interesting facts about dandruff

(NC)—Here are some helpful facts and tips on dandruff to help better understand the condition, which routinely affects so many people.

- Dandruff is a very common problem and anyone can be affected by excessive dandruff at any age. In fact, upwards of 97% of Canadians will suffer from dandruff at some time in their lives.
- Dandruff is not contagious nor considered a disease and can be managed and controlled.
- A person's outward appearance is important and dandruff can affect one's self-confidence.
- Shedding of the skin is a natural occurrence. Dandruff occurs when

we shed too much of the scalp's skin cells.

- Dandruff growth tends to increase during winter compared to summer for most people and can be associated with itching of the scalp.
- Some people think that dandruff begins to increase at the early stages of hair loss. However, an increase in the amount of dandruff does not necessarily mean that there is a "cause-effect" relationship resulting in the thinning of hair.
- Just because one product doesn't work they all don't work. Keep trying until you find one that works best for you.
- Dandruff is now thought to be associated with a fungus naturally

growing on the scalp, *Malassezia furfur*, so medicated shampoos with anti-fungal activity can be very beneficial.

- Routine cleaning of combs and brushes can reduce the presence of any fungus from previous use.
- If you suffer from mild dandruff, regular washing of your hair should be sufficient to control dandruff.
- If you suffer from persistent, stubborn flaking or your scalp becomes inflamed, and if over-the-counter shampoos don't seem to work consult with your doctor or dermatologist for a prescription product solution that's right for you.

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