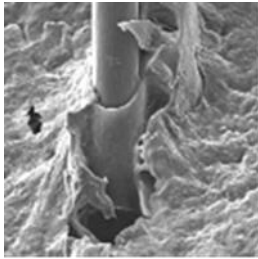


Pityriasis Capitis – Dandruff



*Micrograph supplied by
Tony Maleedy MIT*

Pityriasis capitis is the medical term for dandruff. This condition is neither inflammatory nor contagious and presents with white loose scaling.

Over our entire body we shed daily the top layer of the epidermis. This layer of skin is constantly being removed when we shower, on our clothes and on bedding. This does not generally cause any issues but, when the flakes of skin on the head become trapped by the hair on an oily or dry scalp then there is a need to treat the condition.

As dandruff is not contagious, it cannot be passed on to anyone else and therefore no one should be worrying unduly about this. However, sufferers of dandruff become quite concerned and embarrassed by the cosmetic appearance, when white flakes fall onto dark clothing.

It is very important that the hair and scalp are kept clean, with appropriate cleaning products. A dry scalp requires moisturising as use of incorrect shampoos can remove too much moisture but an oily scalp requires product which gently remove the build-up of excess sebum (natural oils).

There is no cure for this condition but it can be controlled in the following ways:

- It is important to shampoo and condition the scalp and hair daily to reduce scale build-up.
- Before shampooing the hair, using your fingers, agitate the surface of the scalp and hair. This will loosen some scales.
- Then, brush the hair to loosen more scale at scalp level.
- Comb the hair to remove any further loose scale which may have become drawn onto the hair by the brushing.
- Apply a small amount of aqueous cream to the scalp, using gentle circular movements and allow the aqueous cream to gently soften the scale for 10 minutes.
- Prior to wetting the hair, you will need to apply a small amount of shampoo to the scalp, working it in gently, which will then emulsify the aqueous cream. Then rinse with warm water, to remove the cream, before shampooing.
- You get the best results when you shampoo twice and this is normally what will be stated on the packaging.
- After rinsing thoroughly, apply a light moisturising conditioner. Note that this will then need rinsing off unless it is a 'leave in' conditioner. The comb should then be able to pass through the hair to disentangle the hair in readiness for styling.
- To dry the hair, use a hair drier on a medium heat, gently agitating the surface of the scalp with your fingers, This will loosen any scale that has not already been removed.

Helpful Products

- Aqueous cream.
- Shampoos which contain gentle softening agents.
- Sulphate free shampoos.
- Moisturising shampoos and conditioners.

57 The Ridgeway, Burntwood, Staffordshire. WS7 8SW
cpw@birminghamtrichology.co.uk
Tel: 01543 670717

- Bristle brushes.
- Vulcanite combs.

For most people the above regime should help to manage the condition. In some severe cases, however, it may be necessary to have a test to check for a bacterial imbalance, For this your GP should be able to advise concerning a referral to a hospital. Even if this is necessary, this does not mean that you should not also continue to regularly follow the above hair care regime to remove the scale.

It is important not to pick at scaling on the scalp as this may cause tenderness and could dislodge hairs from within the follicle, causing localised hair loss, and also lead to a secondary infection.

If you are concerned that you may have this condition then seek a consultation with a registered Trichologist, who will be able to diagnosis, advise on management and, where appropriate, refer on to other professionals.

Carol Walker FIT LCGI Cert.Ed.
Consultant Trichologist
Fellow of Institute of Trichologist (London).