

STUDIES SHOW: BLACKCURRANTS MAY PROMOTE HEALTHY HAIR GROWTH AND COMBAT HAIR LOSS

Forms of hair loss and thinning hair affect both men and women, with the most common being androgenetic alopecia, or male pattern baldness, effecting nearly 50% of all men. Until recently, over the counter topical treatments and prescription medications have been the only products to offer hope to those suffering from hair loss, but recently bodies of scientific research suggest that natural components found in New Zealand Blackcurrant berries may help to promote hair health, while reducing the causes of baldness.

WHAT CAUSES HAIR LOSS?

Androgenic alopecia is described as the miniaturization of androgen-sensitive hair follicles, and researchers have linked this hair loss to genetic predisposition, stress, damaging hair treatments, and even the use of prescription drugs. The internal causes of hair loss begins with the key enzyme, 5 alpha reductase, plays a key role in hair loss, as it is the main component that converts testosterone in men and women, into the metabolite dihydrotestosterone (DHT). Because 5-alpha reductase is found in the scalp and skin, this metabolism is trivial to the onset of baldness and hair loss.

Along with causing hair loss, 5 alpha-reductase has also been linked to numerous organs including skin, and the prostate, and has also been considered a leading factor in the progression of prostate cancer.

SCIENTIFIC BACKING

Numerous scientific studies have explored the effects of natural components such as New Zealand Blackcurrant's anthocyanins and the essential fatty acid gamma linolenic acid (GLA) on 5-alpha reductase and DHT. Studies have utilized both topical and digestive applications, and found that these natural elements may play important roles in regulating androgen action.

One specific study by Ben May Institute at the University of Chicago tested the ability of GLA to inhibit 5 alpha-reductase activity. The researchers measured the enzyme conversion of the testosterone into DHT, and found that of the unsaturated fatty acids tested, GLA was the most potent inhibitor.

"These results suggest that unsaturated fatty acids may play an important role in regulating androgen action in target cells."

Yet another study by the Department of Dermatology, School of Medicine, University of California Davis explored how the androgens that cause hair loss, also play a role in the progression of prostate cancer, and how GLA can inhibit this activity. The results showed that while aicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) inhibited the DHT activity of 5 alpha-reductase, GLA was able to inhibit this activity by a remarkable 80%.

"These findings therefore imply that dietary GLA rather than EPA should better attenuate prostate carcinogenesis."

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT BLACKCURRANT AND HAIR LOSS?

Articles have been flooding the media recently, as studies continue to reveal the surprising link between natural blackcurrant components, and hair health. One article at www.hairlossinformation.com stated that GLA has been proven to inhibit 5-alpha reductase, and even stated "In fact, these are the most powerful inhibitors of 5-alpha reductase known today." In a similar newsletter by Dr. HingHau Tsang, he recommended that hair loss sufferers' avoid hydrogenated oils that suppress essential fatty acids, like GLA, in the human body. Both Dr.

Tsang and the popular Dr. Oz advised individuals to consume supplemental GLA, and one of Dr. Oz's articles stated, "Blackcurrant oil...supplements are shown to be effective because it has GLA to make robust hairs and new hairs."

Several years ago, an interview was published with Dr. Alex Khadavi, who specializes in dermatology, including skin and hair health. When asked about a specific consumer hair loss product's ingredients, he replied "I was very surprised to learn that some fatty acids such as GLA were even more effective than a FDA approved medication such as Propecia, and could be used topically without any systemic side effects."

ANTIOXIDANTS MAY IMPROVE HAIR LOSS CAUSES TOO

And it isn't just Blackcurrant's GLA that is getting attention in the hair loss and balding industries, as the berry's natural antioxidants such as anthocyanins and polyphenols are gaining increasing recognition. Takahashi's recent research concluded that Proanthocyanidins displayed the ability to increase hair cycle converting, which the researchers claim could be a possible cure for androgen alopecia.