

natural bodycare

reader questions & answers

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shampoo & hair care

Do you have a shampoo recipe for gray-silver hair?

Question: Could you share a recipe for shampoo for gray-silver hair, to help pickup my highlight? - **Selma**

Answer: We use the no-shampoo method in my home, but a good recipe for those not wanting to do a natural shampoo is to combine 1/2 cup herbal infusion (chamomile is a good choice for gray-silver hair) with 1/4 cup liquid castile soap (like Dr. Bronners), up to 1/4 teaspoon carrier oil (like almond oil) and essential oil of your choice (chamomile is, again, good for graying hair).

How do I make styling products?

Question: And I have a question - any idea how to make body-friendly hair styling products? - **Heather**

Answer: A pommade made of unrefined shea butter, coconut oil, beeswax and essential oils can be effective. Some readers use a soft gelatin, but I don't have a recipe for that. Sugar water or sugar water with lemon and essential oils can be used as hairspray.

What can I use for my kids?

Question: Anything kids can use that won't hurt their eyes? And how to keep hair and skin clean and looking good. - **Vandy**

Answer: I recommend the no-shampoo method, even for children. Hair will normalize and look great without shampoos, and regular brushing will properly distribute the hair's protective oils. Monthly herbal infusions - which are not necessary, but are nice - do not hurt their eyes.

For keeping the skin clean - children don't need much beyond a washcloth and a good quality soap (if they're particularly dirty). For me, I like to exfoliate and cleanse with a mix of ground herbs and blanched almond flour, moisturize with unrefined shea butter and spritz on a bit of distilled water with essential oils or a hydrosol. A few times a month I might do an herbal steam or do a clay or honey masque.

deodorants & antiperspirants

What can I use for my kids?

Question: First one seems a bit silly, but I am wondering, how often do you all bathe, lol? The reason I ask is because, on a vegan diet, especially in the winter when I don't sweat a lot, I noticed that I didn't need to bathe as often and didn't really smell. Most of the time I didn't even need deodorant. When I did feel I needed it, a light application of any "natural" deodorant worked fine. Now that I am eating meat again, I feel like I need to bathe more often and smell sooner. Maybe this is just part of the transition period since it is new? - **Sara**

Answer: I bathe everyday - not because I need to, but because I find it pleasant. It's a calming ritual for me. My husband, who is very physically active, bathes every few days as does our son.

It could be you're finding the need to bathe more often because your body is detoxing. Sometimes, when we detox we release toxins through our skin and that can create an odor. Also, I've personally found that once I started supplementing with magnesium oil, any body odor disappeared. I still sweat when I'm physically active, but the sweat doesn't have a scent and when it does it's mildly sweet and watery.

What kind of deodorant do you use?

Question: I also find that I need deodorant every day. So, my second question is, what kind of deodorant do you use? - **Sara**

Question: How do I keep the pits from stankin?! Help, I'm not all the way to a strict real food diet yet. Baking soda & aroroot leave burns & coconut oil ain't cuttin it. - **Erica.**

Answer: Up until recently, I was using crystal roll-on deodorant which contains alum. Recently, however, I began supplementing with magnesium oil and found that, while I sweat - especially when physically active, there is no longer any odor. I apply magnesium oil to my lower back and, occasionally, to my underarms. Be prepared for it to sting, and the sting usually resolves within 5 minutes.

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moisturizers & lip balms

What should I use on my face?

Question: I saw the question topic is body care, yay! I'd love some suggestions on what to use on my face; face wash, moisturizer, exfoliating, do you need anti-aging serum. I don't have time to make my own right now what should I look for when buying them? Any brand recommendations? - **Michelle**

Answer: I used to have the time to go through elaborate recipes to make my own facial scrubs, cleansers, creams and lotions, but I no longer have that luxury. However, I still don't buy brand-specific items (with the exception of a few). I don't use face wash as I have sensitive and dry skin and find that using face wash doesn't do my skin any good; however, I find that the exfoliating action of blanched almond meal is sufficient as a cleanser. Be sure to use blanched almond flour because it is softer; ground almonds can be sharp. For moisturizer, I use unrefined shea butter. First I scoop a bit out, rub it between my fingertips to warm it and then apply it to my face. Occasionally I use a beauty balm made by Green Pastures which contains shea butter, fermented cod liver oil and some other goodies. I follow up moisturizing with a few spritzes of water with essential oils or a hydrosol. For anti-aging serum, I recommend using rosehip seed oil or pomegranate seed oil. Be careful with rosehip seed oil - while it does show some promise in addressing wrinkles - if you put it on your T-zone, you're like to break out.

Can you use coconut oil as lip balm?

Question: Anybody ever try using straight up coconut oil as a moisturizer/lip balm? I've noticed I have to constantly reapply it to my lips. Any suggestions? Anybody ever try using straight up coconut oil as a moisturizer/lip balm? I've noticed I have to constantly reapply it to my lips. Any suggestions?

Answer: I find that coconut oil is good in a lip balm recipe but it isn't good on its own as a lip balm - as it can be drying. A wax is really essential in lip balm, it seals in moisture. Lanolin, on its own, is good as a lip balm, but some people may not like the flavor. If you don't want to make your own, many Etsy sellers use high-quality ingredients in their balms.

What about a natural face cream?

Question: I'm looking for a natural face cream for moisturizing in the dry Colorado weather - one without a bunch of additives or weird estrogenic herbs. - **Shannon**

Answer: Colorado weather wreaks havoc on skin! I use unrefined shea butter. First you pull a bit out, warm it in your palms and rub it on your skin. I also sometimes use Green Pasture's beauty balm which is made of both shea butter and fermented cod liver oil as well as essential oils and other nutrient-dense fats. No synthetics, no weird estrogenic herbs. Just good quality, moisturizing fat.

soaps

Any substitute for shortening in soaps?

Question: I have had recommended to me a recipe for a "natural, pure" homemade soap which has olive and coconut oils (which I know are fine), but it also has vegetable shortening and lye as ingredients. I know that lye has been a traditional soap ingredient for pioneers and homesteaders for centuries, but is it healthful? Is shortening (which I would never eat) safe as a soap ingredient, and if not, what would you recommend as a substitute? - **Holly**

Answer: Lye is a traditional soap ingredient, and it's reliable. But shortening can be a little worrisome. You can use non-hydrogenated palm shortening, or any good quality solid fat (shea butter etc.) would be a good choice. Our body absorbs what we put on our skin.

Do you have a recipe for liquid soap?

Question: I would like a recipe for liquid hand soap and one for liquid face wash:) - **Eleni**

Answer: I don't make my own soap (I don't have the time). I do use and recommend Dr. Bronners.



Any substitute for shortening in soaps?

Question: Ideas for making a more natural soap or body wash? I use baking soda for shampoo, vinegar or lemon juice for conditioner, and it works great, but I'm yet to find a good soap replacement (or natural soap recipe). Also - would you say baby oil is less harmful or more than body lotion? -**Julia**

Answer: I recommend Dr. Bronner's for soap - it's natural with no additives. I don't use baby oil or lotion, but I recommend carrier oils (like sweet almond) as moisturizers.

dental

What do you recommend for teeth?

Question: I have developed stains in recent months on my teeth. Is there a natural, non-toxic way to "bleach" stained teeth. - **Holly**

Answer: For remineralization, you might take a look at Ramiel Nagel's Book - Cure Tooth Decay. It provides a protocol for for tooth care.