

Does Rice Water Really Make Your Hair Grow?

It's complicated.

When you're so over having short hair, you might start looking for a quick fix to achieve hair length fast. But here's the spoiler: they don't exist. It'd be amazing if you could grow inches in just a few days, but there's no product or concoction that will make that possible, not even rice water.

Rice water has been making the rounds as a miracle hair treatment for hair growth and while it does have its benefits, there isn't any science that rice water can actually make your hair grow. In order to determine the difference between fact and fiction regarding using rice water for hair growth, we spoke to hair restoration expert, Dr. Robin Unger.

Dr. Unger said that most information about rice water and hair growth is based on anecdotes. What really determines how fast your hair will grow is genetics, but that doesn't mean rice water is totally useless. It can deliver some essential nutrients to your scalp. Here's everything you need to know about using rice water for hair growth.

Where did using rice water originate?

According to Medical News Today, Japanese women living during the Heian period kept their hair healthy by bathing it in rice water.

There's a similar anecdote regarding the Yao women of China. Many Yao women have very long hair that doesn't begin to gray until they reach their 80's. They credit their hair's length and color to a rice water mixture, according to Vogue.

But now the rice water secret is everywhere. A quick YouTube search will produce tons of rice water beauty experiments and recipes.

What do the experts say about rice water?

Dr. Unger says that while there's no proof that water actually makes your hair grow, it

may help stop breakage.

"It is unlikely to be doing anything at the level of the follicle. The follicle is usually the focus for hair growth treatments," Dr. Unger said. "However, there are amino acids and vitamins (including B,C,E in small amounts), which are helpful in strengthening the hair shaft. The stronger the shaft, the longer the hair can grow before it actually breaks."

Dr. Unger says that rice water can protect the hair against damage caused by brushing and styling. "[A] rice water rinse makes the hair smooth and more manageable for combing."

Are there any rice water products for my hair that I can purchase?

If you want to reap the hair strengthening properties of rice water, there are some products you can purchase.

The Purple Rice Water + Color Care Shampoo from SheaMoisture is infused with purple rice water that's rich in antioxidants to make your hair stronger and shinier.

You can use the Rice and Wheat Volumizing Shampoo from Kiehl's to make your hair appear fuller and thicker as you patiently wait for it to grow out.

This plant-based shampoo from Le Labo is made with rice and rosemary extracts to strengthen hair and stimulate the scalp.

If you're looking for something nourishing for your curls, then try the Briogeo Curl Charisma Rice Amino + Avocado Hydrating Shampoo. The shampoo helps your hair maintain moisture and body, without weighing your curls down.

How can I make my own rice water?

It's pretty easy to make your own rice water at home. Once the rice water's made you can apply it to your hair and rinse it out or use it as a leave-in treatment.

You can make fermented rice water by mixing equal parts water and uncooked rice. Before mixing, you want to give the rice a quick rinse so that it's clean of any impurities. You'll then let the rice water mixture sit at room temperature less than 24 hours.

To preserve the rice water, you can refrigerate it.

What kind of ingredients should I be looking for in my hair growth products?

If you want to complement your rice water routine, you can opt for other hair products that will stimulate hair growth. Dr. Unger says it's important to choose products that will keep your hair hydrated.

Hair products should have emollients to smooth the hair shaft and protect from drying. [Some] examples include products with shea butter, coconut oil, avocado oil or argan oil."

Keep a regular routine and you'll be giving Rapunzel competition in no time.