



DANDRUFF BUSTERS

Will 2013 be the year you finally shake off dandruff? Blame excess shedding of the scalp's top layer of skin cells for the flurry of white flakes. While the jury is out on what causes dandruff, likely suspects include a yeast fungus. To keep the flaking in check, enlist these nature-approved aids. —RACHEL DOWD

SULFUR

WHY Sulfur has antifungal and keratolytic (aka exfoliating) properties, says Texas-based dermatologist Nicole Mathis, MD. That means sulfur wipes out the yeast believed to lead to dandruff and helps unclog hair follicles. A study in *Cutis* showed that a shampoo containing 2 percent sulfur in combination with 2 percent salicylic acid significantly relieved dandruff symptoms.

HOW Wash your hair three times a week with a shampoo containing 2 percent sulfur, ideally partnered with 2 percent salicylic acid; leave on for five minutes before rinsing. Look for a shampoo with natural fragrance to dispel sulfur's rotten-egg smell.

KIT PICKS

Jason Dandruff Relief Treatment Shampoo, \$10.87/12 oz.; jason-natural.com

Bragg Organic Apple Cider Vinegar, \$3.49/16 oz.; bragg.com

Now Certified Organic Essential Oils, Tea Tree, \$11.99/1 oz.; nowfoods.com

TEA TREE OIL

WHY A tough antibacterial and antifungal agent, this astringent essential oil has been shown to combat dandruff: a study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* found improvement in dandruff sufferers who shampooed daily with a formula containing 5 percent tea tree oil.

HOW A 5 percent tea tree oil shampoo may be a rarity in stores, but you can easily make your own. Peter Bongiorno, ND, medical director at Inner Source Health in New York, suggests adding 15 drops of tea tree oil to ½ ounce of a mild shampoo. Gently massage the shampoo into your scalp, letting it sit for up to five minutes before rinsing.

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

WHY The naturally occurring acetic acid in this home-remedy staple is key to its dandruff-fighting power. Theoretically, the acidity of the vinegar alters the pH of the skin, which stymies the growth of the yeast suspected of triggering dandruff, says Hawaii-based naturopath Laurie Steelsmith.

HOW Steelsmith recommends diluting apple cider vinegar in equal parts water, and applying liberally to your scalp. Leave on for five to 10 minutes, and rinse, then shampoo and condition your hair using gentle products. Because apple cider vinegar can dry out hair strands, resist drenching your locks. Like any acidic substance, vinegar can burn (tingling is OK). Spot test an area first to ensure against excessive irritation, and avoid open lesions.

