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Rosemary Oil for Hair Loss: What the Research Actually Shows

A 2015 study compared rosemary oil to 2% minoxidil in 100 men with pattern hair loss. After six months both groups had a similar rise in hair count. The rosemary group also reported less scalp itching.

That's the main piece of human evidence we have. The trial was small, used the weaker 2% minoxidil, and didn't include a pure placebo group. Later lab and animal work suggests rosemary may improve blood flow in the scalp and reduce some of the effects of DHT on follicles, but we still need bigger, better trials.

It seems most useful for mild to moderate pattern hair loss. People who want something milder than minoxidil often try it. It won't reverse advanced baldness or scarring alopecia, and it won't fix shedding caused by thyroid problems, iron deficiency or sudden stress.

How to use it

Never put pure essential oil on your scalp. Dilute it to about 2–3% roughly 6–9 drops of rosemary oil in a tablespoon of carrier oil.

Joboba works well for most scalps because it's close to natural sebum. Coconut oil helps reduce protein loss in the hair shaft. Castor oil is thicker; many people mix it with something lighter so it spreads and washes out more easily.

Patch-test the mix on your inner arm for a day first. Then part the hair, put a few drops on the scalp (not just the lengths), and massage for a few minutes. Leave it on for half an hour or overnight under a shower cap, then wash it out. Start two or three times a week. If your scalp stays calm you can go daily. Most people who see any change need three to six months of regular use.

Cautions

Stop if you get redness, burning or more shedding. Skip it if you're pregnant or breastfeeding unless a doctor says otherwise. Oils can support the scalp but they don't replace medical care when something else is driving the hair loss.

Rosemary is one of the few natural options with a head-to-head human study behind it. Use it consistently, keep expectations realistic, and get checked if the shedding is sudden or severe.