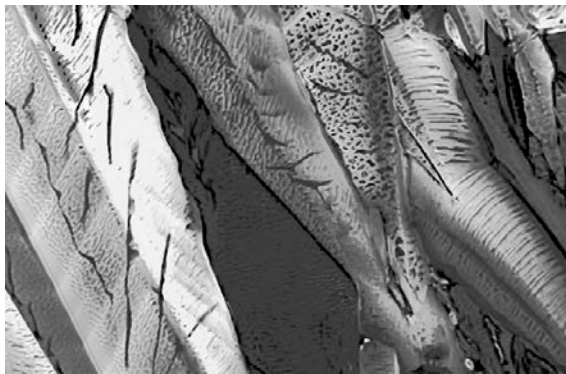


## Hair

# Key words

**Cystine:** this amino acid makes up ~10% of the amino acids in keratin, so is about 1/5th of your hair. Cystine molecules contain sulfur atoms. These can make covalent bonds with other sulfur atoms in cystine molecules on other hair fibres. The sulfur-sulfur bonds have a special name, 'disulfide links', and give hair strength.



Cystine through a microscope  
Reproduced with kind permission from Michael W. Davidson.

**Keratin:** this is the name for the chemical compound from which hair is made. It is a protein, so molecules of keratin are made from amino acids.

**Protein:** a protein is a compound made from amino acids joined together. There are 20 different amino acids found in nature. In a protein, amino acids form covalent bonds with each other, making a long molecule. Most amino acids come from our diet, with the body making the rest. So, to help keep hair healthy we need to eat a good diet.



Helix of hair keratin  
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[www.hair-science.com](http://www.hair-science.com) (accessed November 2003).

