

What's with my Hair Falling Out !?

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By Dr. Thomas S. Lee, NMD

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"Yeeee gads! My hair is falling out!" This is a cry that can affect your whole family for long, awkward moments. What is it with your hair? Is it gone forever?

Let's clear up some confusion and try to notch down some panic about this kind of a look in the mirror.

About Hair

Healthy hair simply looks good. The healthier your scalp and hair follicles, the better your hair will look. If you're starting to experience some hair loss and a general decline in the overall health of your hair and scalp, it has probably been deteriorating for a while, and you're only now seeing the effects.

Hair grows in a cycle of three phases. Each individual hair is in a growth phase (anagen phase) for 2–6 years, before it enters a transition phase (catagen phase) for 1–2 weeks, and then a resting phase (telogen phase) for 5–6 weeks. After that, the hair dies and falls out. Then the follicle returns to the growth phase, and a new hair begins to grow.

In normal, healthy adults, the approximate percentages of hairs in these three different phases are: 84% in the growth (anagen) phase 0–1% in the transition (catagen) phase 14–15% in the resting (telogen) phase

Returning your hair follicles to the anagen growth cycle is the objective of any plan to regrow healthier hair.

DHT Effects On the Hair Follicle

The medical term for hair loss is alopecia. This is defined as a state where 20% or more of a person's hairs are in the telogen (resting) phase.

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In cases of alopecia, the hair growth cycle has been altered so that the anagen (growth) phase is shortened. This results in an increased percentage of hairs in the catagen and telogen phases.

The enzyme conversion of testosterone creates a compound called Di-Hydro Testosterone (DHT). The effect of DHT on the hair follicles and oil glands of the scalp can be detrimental to the anagen phase that you want to lengthen.

In areas of hair thinning or loss, the follicles have more sites to which DHT can attach, and more DHT at those sites. This buildup of DHT near the follicles can shorten their growth phase and increase the numbers of hairs in the transition and resting phases. A continuation in this buildup of DHT will actually shrink the hair follicles, which causes their hairs to become thinner, weaker, and look less healthy.

Reality Check: No product known today will grow a hair without a viable hair follicle. Only a healthy

hair follicle can grow a hair.

A healthy hair follicle can resist the negative effects of DHT buildup and continue in a normal growth cycle longer than an unhealthy one can. Hair care products that seek to lessen DHT work by binding to the same sites on the hair follicle to which DHT attaches. This blocks the abnormal response of the follicle to DHT, so it blocks the harm that is causing the weakening and loss of the hair.

The nutritional supplements recommended by a naturopathic physician work by helping the body to normalize its hormone levels, while increasing the circulation of nutrients and elimination of waste products from the hair follicle. This increases the strength of the follicle and protects it from further damage.

The amounts of the conversion enzymes that create DHT from testosterone, as well as the amounts of testosterone or cortisol, are thought to be genetically determined. This is why some people tend to have less of a problem with DHT than others.

The good news is that a person's genetic expression (i.e., how their body is now) can be changed by what that person does in the upcoming weeks, months, and years, as well as how they do it. With advances in the scientific understandings of these physical events, you can arm yourself with the right information and learn to make the changes necessary to stop a hair loss problem. We'll next explain how.

Hair Loss

A variety of health conditions and environmental factors can cause hair loss. Likewise, many different approaches can be taken to stop hair loss and even grow hair back.

Certainly, having great hair is important to us, but the body has many other important things to do on a continuous basis. Some are higher priorities than maintaining lustrous hair — things like breathing, eliminating waste, absorbing food, protecting itself from infections, fleeing from danger, and so forth. If the body has a limited budget of energy, nutrients, and strength, it starts to redirect its resources to the

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tasks it deems most important. This is fortunate for us.

If stressful events occur to lower that 'budget,' the body may find it necessary to prioritize other functions more highly than hair growth.

For example, if a person undergoes a series of radiation treatments to kill cancer, the treatments incur a major stress on the body. The body's first priority then becomes to live and breathe to grow nice hair another day. As a result, hair loss is often the consequence of radiation treatments. Hair regrowth after this type of trauma is possible, however, depending on the state of the hair follicles and the person's overall capacity to return to health. Naturopathic doctors call this their "vital force."

Major Causes of Hair Loss

Hair loss might also be caused by various types of injury to the scalp, such as burns, radiation, acid spills, or scrapes. If the follicles are destroyed and replaced by smooth skin or scar tissue, a lotion or vitamin routine won't very likely restore hair growth. At this point, it may be time for an implant, a weave, a wig, or a toupee. Or maybe it's just time to accept the reality of a lack of hair. Bald can be beautiful, too.

Furthermore, various diseases, genetic tendencies, and auto-immune disorders can direct the body to neglect the health of the hair follicle, or even attack it directly. Some of these attacks might be triggered by environmental toxins, the side-effects of drugs, nutrient deficiencies, irregularities of hormone metabolism, or poor elimination of wastes. Here, we could discuss lifestyle choices and explanations of natural sciences such as nutrition, physiology, and biochemistry until your eyes glaze over.

If you have been taking anti-depressive medications like Zoloft or Paxil, you should be aware that the known side-effects of these types of drugs can include hair loss. The vicious cycle of compounding one's depression by having to deal with hair loss makes these drugs a thing worth trying to avoid. Work with your doctor and be smart about your use of any medications, because many drugs have negative effects on hair growth.

If you are a "stress puppy," and the slightest disruption in your plans tears you to pieces for hours or days at a time, your body's response to those stress hormones can be yet another factor in hair loss and graying. Some training in stress management or anger resolution would be your best bet, while treating the resultant hair loss with physical medicines and lotions.

Sudden Hair Loss

Sudden hair loss can occur after severe psycho-physical stresses like illness, childbirth, menopause, losing a job, or loss of a loved one. This type of hair loss appears within a few weeks or a month of the trauma, depending on its severity. It is often reversible with time, emotional healing, and the principles of physical support described here.

Hair Loss in Women

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Women seldom lose their hair for reasons of genetic predisposition. They do, however, experience hair loss from the other causes we've already mentioned. In addition, women are more commonly the consumers of hair treatments which are known to damage the hair and cause breakage and thinning. Rough handling, harsh commercial shampoos, perms, hair color, bleach, and cosmetics all can damage the hair follicles. Hormone fluctuations through life events of men or women also contribute to stress on the physical condition of the hair follicle.

Factors to Consider

What does your body need to keep your hair looking good? Factors include good nutrition, effective elimination of wastes, exercise affecting the circulation, a good attitude, use of safe non-toxic products, and sensible protections from injury. These contribute to healthy glandular functions, especially of the thyroid, adrenals, gonads, and liver. If the links in this chain of hormone functions are weak or broken, your hair will probably be the least of your problems. It might just be the most visible one in your mirror, though.

Before you spend significant amounts of money on lotions or supplements to treat hair loss, try to figure out what is causing your hair to fall out, and change what you can about that underlying situation.

Enlist the help of your doctor to figure out any internal causes. Have your hormone levels tested for thyroid, adrenal, pituitary, and functions of the ovaries or testes. Make sure your nutritional intake and

digestive functions are up to par. Again, this is a complex issue. It may take some study about the lotions and natural medicines available to find a plan that works for you, but the benefits to your health and appearance will be worth the effort.

For a detailed description of Dr. Lee's treatment recommendations, visit

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, where you can find an extensive

library of information on natural health approaches, as well as worldwide access to physician's-quality health products that support these concepts.

When Not To Color

By Jenny Andrews B

We all know the girl. Every time you see her, she has a different color hair. One week it might be streaked with blond highlights, the next it is vibrant red. And so it goes until the day you see her with an

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extremely short cut or worse yet, a ball cap. When you ask what happened, she blames it on a color disaster. She got a hold of a box of color that had something wrong with it or some similar excuse. But you've seen it coming. I mean, how many times can you actually color your hair without it falling out?

To avoid the same mistake, there are a few simple rules that you should follow. No, you don't have to be relegated to wearing the same hair color all of the time. You can change your look every now and then. The key to it, though, is to know when and when not to color your hair to avoid hair color burn out.

Before you color your hair, you should always check it to see if it is strong enough to withstand another coloring. There are a few ways that you should do this. First, shampoo your hair and feel it for overall dryness before you add conditioner. If your hair feels like straw or something other than hair, you should not color. You can also take an individual hair strand and test it for breakage. Simply apply tension to the hair strand until it breaks. If it breaks easily without stretching, you definitely cannot color. Another thing to look for is fading color. If you have been coloring your hair only to have the color fade out within a few weeks, your hair is in no condition for further coloring.

In addition to checking your hair to see if it can be colored, you should also avoid certain color combinations to eliminate or reduce damage. When making hair color changes, avoid drastic differences. For example: Do not lighten your dark brown hair to platinum blond only to put deep red on it and then try to lighten it again. What you will end up with is mush.

You should also wait a good while in between hair colors. Wait at least 6 to 8 weeks between root touchups. If you want to change your hair color completely, you should use the following time guidelines: Going darker - wait 4 weeks after last color. Going lighter - wait 8 weeks after last color. And always check to see if your hair is strong enough to withstand the service. If in doubt, ask a professional.

Jenny is a hair expert, and the author of an incredible free minicourse, that explains how to find your unique style, how long or short you should have your hair, how to find the right hair color for you, how to find the right salon, and a lot more. Go to

now and get this amazing

hair minicourse - absolutely free

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