

HAIR LOSS

Hair loss is a common condition that affects most people (depending on the severity) at some point in their lives. Humans have between 100,000 and 150,000 strands hairs on their head. The number of strands normally lost in a day varies, but on average it is about 100. When more than 100 hairs fall out per day, clinical hair loss may occur. In order to maintain a normal volume, hair must be replaced at the same rate at which it is lost.

Hair is made up of a protein called keratin that is produced in the outer layer of the skin (hair follicles). As follicles produce new hair cells, old cells are pushed out through the surface of the skin. At any given time, about 90% of the hair on the scalp is growing. But, as people age, their rate of hair growth slows.

Hair loss is also called Alopecia or baldness. It refers to loss of hair from the head or body, but mostly from the head. It is simply a partial or complete lack of hair growth.

Types of Hair Loss

There are different types of hair loss and each presents a unique symptom and shedding pattern.

- Male or female pattern hair loss (MPHL or FPHL): This is a type of hair loss that affects the top or front of the scalp. It takes the form of a receding hairline in males and is seen as hair thinning in females.
- Alopecia Areata: Also known as spot baldness. This is a condition in which often results in bald spots on the scalp.
- Telogen Effluvium: This is a scalp disorder characterized by thinning or shedding of hair, resulting from early entry of hair into the telogen phase (the resting phase of the hair follicle).
- Traction Alopecia: This is a type of hair loss that is localized around areas of the head that experiences tension from tightly worn hairstyles like braids and cornrows. This hair tension is also caused by processing the hair with chemicals such as peroxide bleach.
- Diffuse Hair Loss: This is caused by a range of different factors. It often points to an underlying medical factor or nutritional deficiencies. It leads to a general thinning of hair.

- Alopecia Universalis: This is the most advanced form of alopecia and an auto-immune disorder, that results in the total hair loss all over the body. It leaves areas like nasal cavity, eyes, and scalp very exposed.
- Ophiasis: It is a type of alopecia areata whereby the loss of hair happens in a w-like shape surrounding the head.
- Alopecia Totalis: this is an auto-immune disorder resulting in total hair loss on the scalp, face, eyebrow and eyelashes.
- Trichotillomania: This is a disorder whereby an individual compulsively pulls at their hair, thereby resulting in considerable hair loss.
- Lichen: This is a disease that commonly affects the mouth and skin. It also leads to irritation, redness and permanent hair loss in some cases.
- Folliculitis: This is a bacterial condition that causes irritation to the hair follicles. It can lead to inflammatory nodule encircling the hair. Affected hairs can easily fall off.
- Trichorrhexis Nodosa: It is a hair fibre defect that causes swelling and fraying nodes in specific spots down the hair fibres length.

Causes of Hair Loss

Hair loss can be caused by variety of reasons.

- Drugs: Temporary or permanent hair loss can be caused by several medications side effects including those for blood pressure problems, diabetes, heart diseases, hormone replacement therapy, contraceptive, steroids, chemotherapy and birth control pills.
- Dissecting Cellulitis: It is caused by a microscopic mite that feeds on the sebum produced by the sebaceous glands, hence it denies essential nutrients to the hair and causes thinning.
- Trauma: Heat treatment, rough scalp massage, severe hairstyles, major surgery, childbirth, illness severe stress, poisoning, radiation to scalp and other forms of trauma can lead to hair loss.
- Pregnancy: Hair loss often follows childbirth in the post-partum period without causing baldness.
- Genetics or Autoimmune Causes: hair loss is not always caused by disease or lack of nutrients. Hereditary is a common cause of hair loss.

Genetic factors and overall aging process can cause hair loss or balding. Many men and women may notice hair thinning from their 30s and 40s.

- Lack of proper nutrients: Lack of nutrients that helps in hair growth can trigger hair loss. Nutrients like protein, iron, Vitamin B, B 12, biotin can hairs to be lost.

Psychological Effects of Hair Loss

Hair is an important part of the male and female physique, hence no one would want to lose their hair if given a chance, because dealing with hair loss is quite emotional and challenging. Discovery of hair loss can be stressful experience for both sexes.

Hair loss in most people causes emotional and psychological effects. Hair loss can be a devastating loss to some people and even result in severe depression and anxiety. Because of the importance society has attributed to hair, most people now depend on their hair to make them feel beautiful or boost their self-esteem.

Many people who experience hair loss are able to deal with it, while others are not. Most people lose their self-confidence and end up feeling like they have lost control over their lives. Feeling of introversion and despair may also result, as an insecure image may affect social life.

Hair Loss Treatment and Restoration Options

Seeing as you did not choose to let your hair go, you can choose to do something about it.

It is recommended that you assess how your hair loss makes you feel, in order to make the right treatment choice. Meanwhile, here are some treatment and restoration options:

- Nutrition: proper diet containing healthy nutrients can help salvage temporary hair loss. Nutrient deficiencies weaken the hair and make it prone to breakage, while a diet rich in protein, fats, vitamins B12, B, healthy fats, fruits and vegetables and other essential minerals can place you on the path to a healthy hair growth.

Pros: It is simple enough to follow through for temporary hair loss.

Cons: It is not a solution for severe hair loss or genetic balding.

Cost Implication: The price varies from 13\$ for a single pack.

- Laser Light Therapy: This portable device uses low heat laser light and is said to arguable grow hair by stimulating blood flow to the area. It is good for people who have noticed increased shedding and want to maintain more of the hair they have on their head.

Pros: It is portable, has minimal risk, no known side effect.

Cons: It is not a popular choice because; it is quite expensive, the effect on hair is minimal, it must be used daily and indefinitely, it does not work for everyone and for major balding.

Cost Implication: from \$195

- Hair Replacement Surgery or Fisticulsar Unit Extraction (FUE): It is a form of hair transplant for replacing and restoring lost hair. A doctor surgically removes a strip of hair from the back of a patient, dissects every hair graft under a microscope and then plants the individual grafts into areas of the scalp via incision. It is a major hair replacement option.

Pros: It is a good and well known measure for severe balding.

Cons: It is expensive, painful, may cause scars on the head, involves surgery, more than one surgery may be needed to get the desired result. In some cases, hereditary hair loss would proceed despite surgery.

Cost Implication: \$4000-\$15,000

- Medication/Drug Use: two drugs, Minoxide (Rogaine) and Finastende (Provel) are two FDA approved drugs to treat hair loss. These drugs work by re-growing hair and slowing the hair loss process

Pros: They do not involve surgery or any painful process and actually help grow hair and slow the hair loss process.

Cons: These drugs come with their share of side-effects. Ranging from chest pain, diminished sexual function and scalp irritation. They also involve a lifetime commitment, because if the medication is stopped, hair loss or baldness resumes.

Cost Implication: from \$29

- Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP): Platelets are believed to contain specialized proteins called growth factor, which aids healing. Hence a doctor take some of the patient blood, spins it to separate the platelets from other

cells and then puts the platelets back into the liquid part of the blood (the plasma). Now this plasma method is being used to regrow hair. The PRP is injected into the hair follicle to stimulate hair growth.

Pros: It is said to help in hair restoration, and also used as an alternative method to hair replacement surgery.

Cons: There is no standard process for this method yet. It isn't available in most clinics and doctors offering this treatment are relatively small. It is also an expensive process.

Cost Implication: from \$32,000

- Shampoos, Hair Fibres and Herbal Solutions: These are mainly for temporary hair loss, and their effect for pronounced hair loss or balding have not been proven.

Pros: Non-surgical, little or no side effect, easy to use, and affordable.

Cons: Not effective for pronounced hair loss, often a temporary solution, not very effective and does not work for everyone.

Cost Implication: From \$30

- Micro Scalp Pigmentation: This is a non-surgical procedure that transforms a bald head into a clean shaven look. It is an advanced method of cosmetic pigmentation that utilizes the latest technology to create the effect of a full head. This hair pigmentation is a good alternative to surgery and hair restoration.

Pros: Non-surgical, fast, painless, effective hair loss option leaves no scar, it is safe and effective, pocket friendly compared to hair surgery and has little or no side effect

Cons: It may require a yearly touch-ups and a non-professional technician may do a poor job.

Cost Implication: from \$1,800-4000