

Hair Loss



Look Better, Feel Better

- Try wearing your hair in a short style.²
- Consider getting your hair cut short before your treatment starts, although not everyone will experience alopecia.
- Wear a wig, or consider scarves, turbans, or hats.²
- Talk to your hairdresser about protecting your hair, and ask about styles or products to help your hair look thicker.

Protect Your Scalp and Hair

- Use a mild shampoo such as baby shampoo.³
- Use soft brushes and conditioners.⁴
- Avoid brushing or combing vigorously and “teasing” or braiding or plaiting your hair. Also avoid wearing your hair in a pony tail or a tight band, as this can damage and break your hair.⁴
- Sleep on a satin pillowcase to reduce friction while sleeping.³ But don’t use nylon, as it can irritate the scalp.⁴
- Avoid sleeping in rollers. Also, if you wear a hairnet, soft cap, or turban around your head at night it will collect any loose hairs.⁴
- Avoid hot hair dryers, hot curlers, curling irons, and electric rollers.⁴
- Avoid bleaching or coloring your hair.⁴

Relief

As time goes on, you may notice your hair thinning or coming out. There is nothing you can do but treat the symptoms and realize that your hair loss is not permanent.

- If your scalp becomes dry, flaky, or itchy, use a gentle unperfumed moisturizer (of course, not when you’re going out!) You can put olive or almond oil all over your head and scalp if it is irritated.⁴
- If you lose the hair under your arms (this can happen), avoid using perfumed deodorants and substitute baby powder instead.⁴
- Wear a hat at all times when you are outside or in the sun.

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. Consult your health care provider for individualized information about your therapy. Your health care provider should be your primary source of information about your medical condition and treatment.

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Occasionally, hair may thin or fall out during continued treatment with hepatitis C therapy. Alopecia is the medical name for hair loss. As treatment continues, this symptom may get a little worse, but hair will generally grow back after therapy is stopped.¹

Is it Just Vanity?

Don’t be embarrassed if you feel upset about losing your hair. It is normal for both men and women, because the way you look affects how you feel about yourself and the way you present yourself to the outside world.² Additionally, most people associate sudden and severe hair loss with chemotherapy or some other treatment (such as that for hepatitis C), and may assume you have a disease. Because there are no other outward signs of hepatitis C, you may feel that “now the whole world knows.” This is the time when you should talk with your family and doctors about your feelings. What else can you do?

- You can purchase a wig. Do not get a toupee that you glue to your scalp or a hair piece that you plait into your hair.
- Your purchased wig could be natural hair or fake. If it’s natural, don’t forget that it will have to be set and “done” in just the same way you have to set and “do” your own real hair.²
- Synthetic wigs can look natural and do not require as much upkeep—they are easier to clean too.
- If you want a wig that matches your own hair, get the wig as soon as you notice your hair beginning to fall out or thin. This way you can match it to your own hair.
- For men, consider shaving your head entirely.
- Women might try different styles with scarves, turbans, and other inventive head covers.

If you notice significant changes in hair loss, talk to your health care provider to see if your thyroid level has been checked recently. But overall, don’t worry! Your hair will generally grow back after therapy is completed.

References

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