



Men's Hair Transplants

[Read up on the ins and outs of a hair transplant and whether or not it's for you.](#)



Nick Rego

Nothing makes a man lose confidence in his appearance faster than losing his precious head of hair. For some men the change is subtle, with only discreet patches of hair going missing here and there. For others it's more severe, affecting various zones of the head. There are different ways men deal with hair loss - some just shave or trim all of their hair off, others try their best to style their hair differently, while others opt for a more permanent solution - hair transplants. The technology has come a long way in the last few years, and men's hair transplants in Dubai alone has become one of the most popular treatments this year. But just how complicated is a hair transplant and are there any serious risks involved in getting one?

To get to the *root* of the matter, we sat down with Anisa Vrabac, Head of Hair Transplant Department at **Dubai Cosmetic Surgery**, to talk about the different types of hair transplants available, and just how the procedure is done.

What are some of the main factors that contribute to hair loss?

There are a lot of myths surrounding hair loss. A lot of the time I'll hear from patients "Since I moved to Dubai the water is not very good blah blah blah" which is a complete myth. 1 in 3 estimated men throughout the world have some level of hair loss and more than 95%, estimated 98% have what is

known as androgenetic alopecia which is a genetic type of hair loss. So more than 95% is purely genetic, so even if you're perfectly healthy and fit and there's nothing physically wrong with you, you can still have hair loss.



Hair loss typically begins when the testosterone levels are at their highest which is the late teens and early twenties. Most men that have genetic hair loss will experience some level of hair loss between the ages of 23 to about 27. As they approach their 30s that level of high speed hair loss starts to slow down, so by the age of 35 men will lose about 70-75% of the hair that they're meant to lose anyway. From 35 onwards the hair loss doesn't really stop but whatever hair the patient has remaining will continue to degrade, which is known as miniaturising of the hair. The follicle, which typically contains multiple hair units per root starts to degrade, so it becomes finer and thinner, and eventually the hair starts to stand upward because there's no weight to it.

There are several products on the market that claim to cure baldness or reduce hair loss such as shampoos, but do any of them work?

In the example of shampoo, this is something that you apply, rinse and wash out. Whatever active ingredients that might be found in that particular shampoo are gone down the drain. Oils on the other hand are good for hair texture, not for the scalp, and hair loss is a condition of the scalp. Oils actually do more harm than good because the follicles are natural oil producing glands. When you start applying oil, especially in some cultures where some people have the habit of applying it regularly without washing it out, it penetrates the skin, and distorts the natural pH balance of the skin. If you apply oil to your scalp, the body signals that there is too much oil present, so it stops producing it naturally. Once you stop applying oil you might have dandruff or over dryness so it does more harm than good.

As far as treatments, there are some treatments that work, the most common one that's been on the market for the longest and happens to be the cheapest is the Regaine (in the US known as Rogaine).

The active ingredient is the monoxidil, which basically acts as a vessel dilator. Once you apply the spray which you can find in any common pharmacy, it increases the blood circulation to the follicles, and blood naturally carries the oxygen and the nutrients which helps to stimulate the hair, so you might feel the hair becomes thicker and strong, and hair loss slows down. If you start with maintenance treatments early, not the shampoos or oils but actual scientifically proven treatments then you might be able to preserve most of your hair by the time you're in your 30s.

In layman's terms, what is a hair transplant?

A hair transplant is basically like I said when you have the most common type of hair loss it is known as androgenetic alopecia. It is affecting only the top four regions of the head. Some people lose only the sides, some people lose only the crown and some have simultaneous loss. The type of hair loss is categorised according to how much hair has been lost. The sides and the back of the head is the hair which is known as the dominant hair which is permanent hair and of which we happen to have extra. So it's the excess hair that we need to distribute in the areas where you need them more. Once you finish with the transplant we still have to take a course of action to maintain further hair loss. We spoke about monoxidil, which is something that you can do, but it works to a certain percent. What the patients have to do is reactivate the stem cells of the existing follicles. So to reactivate the stem cells we inject growth factors to any dormant follicles that there might be.



The traditional form used to be the surgical strip method. Up until the last decade it was the golden standard of hair transplant - the scar heals but again a scar is a scar, you will never be able to keep you hair short or play around with the hair style. Nowadays we're specialising in what is known as the Stem Cell FUE, which basically we go in with under 1 mm instrument and collect the extra follicles. There is very little transient redness in the first 24 hours, within 7 days you have complete healing. Afterwards we do a treatment to improve the rest of the hair, so nobody needs to wait for their appearance to change before they actually do something about it.

What's the actual procedure that someone goes through receiving a hair transplant?

A patient typically comes in around 8:30 in the morning, and we start by redesigning the hair line according to the proportions of the face. We check the loss of density in any other area, and decide together with the patient. We then need to shave the donor area to a level 1 and we apply a local

topical high-penetrating anaesthetic spray to the area to numb the skin. Afterwards very gently we will inject lidocaine, which is the same type of anaesthetic used in dentistry or when we're doing facial fillers, which the patient obviously won't feel because prior to that we've numbed the skin. Afterwards, the patient is fully awake throughout, and will be fully comfortable in their own private room. Usually there will be 1 to 2 surgeons plus 3 to 4 technicians during the procedure. We just create small incisions in the skin anywhere where the gap over the natural follicles at some point were and we will just insert the follicles.

The patient can go home the same day, sleep normally, come back the next morning where we will clean and wash the head. The micro grafts will become completely absorbed by the skin in 48-72 hours. They need to be careful in the first week and be very gentle with the hair, so they should avoid let's say pressure from a shower and instead manually wash the hair. By the 7th day there's already pretty much no sign of the transplant. This new hair will shed, because it's shifted from the native place to the another site so it actually grow 1 – 2 mm, afterwards it starts falling out slowly. The new and the permanent hair starts to grow after about a month, approximately 10% per month. After that, it doesn't require any special treatment - if they're colouring their hair they can continue to colour, styling products, shaving colouring cutting, it all goes back to normal, so there are no special precautions that need to be taken. That leads into my next question, if you have hair transplants, do you have to make changes to your hair routine?

None whatsoever. Let's say we're doing it for a female patient, then the first month she shouldn't apply hair colour to the area that was transplanted on, only because the skin is still in the healing stage. Even the men that are colouring their hair, after one month they can go back to colouring, cutting, shaving, grow it long, shave it off, whatever they do. Since it's permanent, if they shave it off it will continue to grow, just like natural hair should.

Are there any complications or risks that are involved?

With the new technique we do 65 surgeries a month, and so far have had zero cases of infections ever developing. The skin like I said closes within 48-72 hours to absorb the graft so that's the initial most important phase. During the first 3 days we do give three days antibiotics as a safety precaution, but after the third day there's nothing to worry about.

How do men figure out which kind of hair transplant is best for them?

What type of hair transplant depends on the technology that you have at hand. The old transplant which is the surgical transplant used to be the industry gold standard like I said up until the past decade. In 2006 internationally we started with what is known as the FUE which stands for follicular unit extraction which does not involve cutting the skin. Currently we are the only clinic in the Middle East and Asia licenced to perform stem cell FUE, and an estimated 30-50% of the follicles we extract will re grow, and regenerate. With the traditional technique you're taking the grafts out and

redistributing them, but there's no growth. The best way to figure out what kind of hair transplant you need is to come in for a consultation, where we would factor in the quality of the hair, which zones are affected, and discuss this all with the patient.

Out of all the hair transplants that you've done, what percentage are done on men? Are more and more men coming in to address their hair loss?

Hair transplant is the most popular cosmetic procedure for men. Most of our patients are very young and are very well aware. The minute they start feeling a little bit of thinning or a little bit recession they immediately take action to do something about it. With the other technique most of the patients would wait until they were a minimum in their mid-30s or 40s to actually do something about it. The trends in terms of age group have definitely changed, but as far as men to women ratio about 95% of procedures are done on men. And keep in mind we're not only doing hair transplants we're also doing full beard transplants for men who might not have perfect facial hair...

Is that really a thing? Are men really getting beard transplants?

This is a very popular treatment especially among the Emiratis because it's a cultural thing to have a properly groomed beard. A lot of the times we'll have patients bringing us pictures- a recent beard transplant we performed was on a patient who aspired to have David Beckham's beard. So we had to recreate a 'David Beckham beard' in terms of the shape, thickness, and density. We had to sort of match it, so we do quite a lot of those. There are also patients that come in who might have a surgical scar or accident scar, but the beard isn't thick enough to cover it so we fill it in for them. We do minimum 10 – 15 beard transplants a month, which is quite a high number.

What are the kind of costs that are involved?

Typically smaller cases can start from AED15,000 and can go up to AED25,000 or AED 28,000 depending on the number of grafts. Growth factor therapy is AED1,200 per session, and typically they would need about 5 sessions.

Is there any sort of advice you can give to men who are at that age thinking about whether or not a hair transplant is right for them?

I would say to come for a consultation because a lot of the men we've treated have said that if they knew it was this easy they would have done it a long time ago. Because people still assume it's a surgical procedure that hurts or is complicated, they don't want to do it. But once they come in and they actually go through the process itself they have a very different opinion. The earlier you start you can take action to not only treat but prevent and also maintain your appearance. Not all transplants are created equal - sometimes it's better to shave off all the hair and be bald willingly than have a poorly performed transplant with scar tissue and things like that. So one should be very informed. In

terms of diet and supplements, we know that vitamin B & D play a big role in hair loss. Fatty acids like fish oil are also quite good.

Is there any age limit when it comes to transplants?

The youngest patient that we have on record was 16 years old. This was very premature hair loss, which he started losing when he was 12 or 13. So that's the youngest in our history, and the oldest that we've done was about 72-73. There is no age factor, we look into the health factor. It is still a cosmetic procedure so we still need to inject lidocaine, so if they're diabetic the diabetes needs to be under control, if they have high blood pressure it needs to be under control. So even patients that are older or with a certain medical conditions, as long as they are healthy at the time of the procedure, there is absolutely no problem.

For more information and consultation, visit [**www.dubaicosmeticsurgery.com**](http://www.dubaicosmeticsurgery.com)