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EXPERT'S ADVICE - BEAUTY / FEBRUARY 26, 2015

Decoding types of hair loss in women



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Losing your hair can be very upsetting and stressful, especially if it is a woman going through this ordeal. Statistics also show that one in every five women will lose her hair at some point in her life.

A lot of apprehension comes with hair loss, adding more to this is the fact of not knowing exactly what is causing your hair to fall off. And for you to find out the reason why you are losing your hair, you have to first decode what type of hair loss you are suffering from.

Considering that hair plays more of an aesthetic role among women more than men, in addition to being her crowning glory, it is important to learn the different types of hair loss among women, so that you can know how to treat or prevent this kind of crisis.

I have put together the most common forms of alopecia, which is either partial or complete hair loss, amongst women and how you can possibly manage them.

Female Pattern baldness (Androgenetic Alopecia): Other than the usual 100 hair follicles that we lose every day, if you suffer from female pattern baldness, you will lose more than that. Your hair will start thinning at the crown slowly moving towards the top of your head. Other areas will not be affected and

will remain as they are. Although this type of baldness is not very well understood, it is thought to be caused by either a change in hormones, aging or genetics. The worst part about pattern baldness is that it is permanent and cannot be reversed. But since the follicles still remain alive after the hair thins out, new hair can still be grown on that patch and that can easily be done through a hair transplant procedure.

Patchy Hair loss (Alopecia Areata): If one day you find very smooth and totally bald patches on your scalp, eyebrows or any other part of your body that is normally hairy, then you suffer from this type of hair loss. It develops very fast and can easily attack an entire head of hair leaving it bald. This condition is characterized by some mild irritation, burning, itching and redness on these smooth patches. An auto immune disease is thought to be the main cause of this type of hair loss. The good news about this patchy hair loss is that it can always grow again after the auto immune disease has been treated. This is because when the hair falls off these patches, the follicles remain alive and are able to grow new hair in a few months after treatment. There are also other treatment options including steroids, topical immunotherapy, minoxidil solutions, wigs, etc.



Traction Alopecia: If you have a tendency to continuously pull your hair, in the long run you will damage the hair follicles hence causing this type of hairloss. One can unknowingly do this through several styling methods including corn rows, braiding, weaving, thermal straighteners or the simple but very tight pony tail. This mostly affects the temporal regions of the scalp but can also cause hair loss in other areas as well depending on the hair style. Although traction alopecia can sometimes cause permanent hair loss; it can still be treated if caught early. But when you suffer permanent hair loss through traction alopecia, Hair Transplantation can also be used to correct the problem.

Involutional alopecia: This is basically the ongoing loss of hair as you grow older. Some of your hair follicles decide to rest, and keep on resting more and more as the years fly by. This type of hair loss can be caused by genetics, diet, or some underlying disorder. The best way to correct involutional alopecia is through a hair transplant procedure or with the use of growth factors to stop the thinning process.

Post-partum hairloss: Also known as post-partum shedding, this happens to millions of mothers. When you are pregnant, “pregnancy hormones” kick in and stop the normal daily loss of 100 or so hairs. This is why your hair looks its healthiest at that time. After your bundle of joy arrives, oestrogen levels drop and your extra hairs that stopped breaking off when you got pregnant, go back to their usual routine once more, hence the reason why you can easily notice the hair loss. The good news is that this phase is only temporary because this excessive loss of hair lasts for about six months or more after onset. In a nutshell, there is nothing to worry about because it is all hormonal and not because your body is lacking in anything.

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