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Hair Loss Condition: Female Pattern Baldness

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Female Pattern Baldness Is a Typically Preventable Disease

The good news is that female pattern baldness can be successfully treated if you catch it early enough.

Overview of female pattern baldness

While natural hair loss in women is generally referred to as female pattern baldness,(or androgenetic alopecia) women's hair loss is rarely classified as true baldness, nor does it often resemble the patterns of hair loss so often seen in men. With diffused thinning of the hair all over the head, hair loss, for women, can have a devastating affect on self-esteem. After all, a womanâ€™s hair isnâ€™t supposed to fall out. That problem belongs to men. Right? Well, not exactly. In fact statistics say that by the age of 80, some 57% of women will experience some level of female pattern baldness.

Causes of female pattern baldness

â€¢ Hormone imbalance -- Scientists have still not reached a consensus about the genetic and hormonal mechanisms that trigger hair loss, but DHT (Dihydrotestosterone) an androgen (male) hormone, is one of the main culprits in hair loss. In women, hormone imbalance often comes with age. Menopause might be the trigger for this extra dose of male hormone that causes hair to thin on the scalp and grow coarser on the face because the body begins to produce less estrogen.

â€¢ Genetics -- Heredity can play a part as well, though scientists are only now identifying the genes responsible. Tendencies for female pattern baldness are inherited through your maternal line. If your mother lost her hair, thereâ€™s a good chance you will, too.

â€¢ Pregnancy -- Women have often experienced some hair loss at some point in their lives because of hormonal imbalance, such as after a pregnancy. Hair grows thicker because of the extra estrogen, but sheds after childbirth. Still, that lost hair usually grows back normally after a few months. With androgen linked hair loss, the thinning of a womanâ€™s hair can go unnoticed for a time. She can attribute her hair loss to stress or diet or even health before the real reason becomes clear. By the time she becomes truly concerned, sheâ€™s seeing white scalp through her hair.

â€¢ Medical issues -- Women experiencing hair loss should check with their doctor to make sure there are no medical reasons for their hair loss. Eliminate illness such as diabetes, thyroid conditions, stress induced alopecia, or prescription medication as the cause.

â€¢ External causes -- Female pattern baldness can also be confused with tension alopecia from over-styling or wearing too tight braids or extensions. Some women have even found certain IUDâ€™s to be suspect in their sudden hair loss.

The life cycle of hair

To understand the process of hair loss, itâ€™s important to understand how our hair reproduces in the first place. Hair grows from tiny hair follicles or living roots. The first phase of hair growth can last anywhere from two to six years. Those with a longer phase can grow long hair, those with a short growth phase can never grow hair past their shoulders before it falls out and starts over. The next

phase is a resting phase. The hair stops growing as a new hair begins to replace it in the follicle and push its way up. When that new hair reaches the top of the root, the old, long hair will fall out or shed.

For reasons not fully understood, DHT chokes off the supply of blood and oxygen to the follicle.

So when a new hair sprouts, it is weaker, thinner, and unhealthier than its predecessor. This process is called miniaturization and it happens over and over until those miniaturized hairs can no longer reproduce themselves. Then the follicle dies. You have less hair regrowing, thus, thinner and thinner hair. Suddenly, you have female pattern baldness.

Take action against female pattern baldness now

Once you have determined that your hair loss is has no medical origin, itâ€™s time to address the problem. Give yourself a kick out of the depression thatâ€™s settled in and realize that you must take action. Once hair follicles die, theyâ€™ll never produce another hair for you. So the faster you try to stop your hair loss, the better your results will be.

Treatment options for female pattern baldness

First, there are DHT inhibitor over-the-counter products that might help stop the shedding and revitalize your strangling hair follicles. Results vary, but like Propecia for men, products like Provillus for women show promise in stopping shedding, regrowing and thickening hair.

Another recent development in female hair loss has been low light laser hair therapy. Laser hair therapy, applied in thirty minute sessions, stimulates blood circulation around the root and nourishes those dying follicles. Studies show nearly 90% of clients trying laser hair therapy showed visible improvement. With any of these methods, patience is a virtue. You wonâ€™t see results immediately because, remember, the hair growth cycle has its own rhythms. Expect anywhere between four and ten months before you see a real difference.

Another option, a more expensive, but permanent one, is follicular transplantation. Hair is harvested from a donor site on the back of the head and implanted where the hair has thinned. The harvested hair is taken from an area not prone to female pattern baldness and will not be subject to the same genetic hair loss triggers as the original hair was. And the hair that regrows will be your own, living hair. Results are excellent with this new follicular technology.

Female pattern baldness: A summary

If you are experiencing female pattern baldness, donâ€™t give up. You owe it to yourself to explore all the possibilities. Make an appointment with a reputable hair restoration clinic and let them help you find your best options. As you try new methods, be patient and allow treatments a chance to work and keep expectations realistic. Along the way, you may just find yourself again.

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