



Do you have hair loss or hair shedding?

If you've been noticing more hairs on your pillow or hairbrush than normal, you may worry that you have hair loss. You could actually just be shedding more hairs than normal.

Hair shedding often stops on its own

It's normal to shed between 50 and 100 hairs a day. When the body sheds significantly more hairs every day, a person has excessive hair shedding. The medical term for this condition is **telogen effluvium**.

Excessive hair shedding is common in people who have experienced one of the following stressors:

- Weight Loss of 20 pounds or more
- Low calorie diets
- Childbirth
- Experiencing lots of stress (Caring for a loved one who is sick, Stress of college, Losing a job)
- Illness, especially one with high fevers
- Undergone an operation
- Stopped taking birth-control pills

Most people notice the excessive hair shedding a few months after the stressful event. For example, a new mom can see excessive hair shedding about two months after giving birth. The shedding usually peaks about four months after giving birth. This shedding is normal — and temporary.

As your body readjusts, the excessive shedding stops. Within 6 to 9 months, the hair tends to regain its normal fullness.

If the stressor stays with you, however, hair shedding can be long lived. People who are constantly under a lot of stress can have long-term excessive hair shedding.

Hair loss differs from hair shedding

Hair loss occurs when something stops the hair from growing. The medical term for this condition is **anagen effluvium**.

The most common causes of hair loss include:

- Hereditary hair loss
- Immune system overreacts
- Some drugs and treatments
- Hairstyles that pull on the hair
- Harsh hair care products
- Compulsion to pull out one's hair

If you have hair loss, your hair will not grow until the cause stops. For example, people who undergo chemotherapy or radiation treatments often lose a lot of hair. When the treatment stops, their hair tends to regrow.

If you suspect that a treatment or drug is causing your hair loss, talk with your healthcare provider before stopping. Serious side effects can occur if you immediately stop a treatment or drug on your own.

Other causes of hair loss may require treatment. Many people who have hereditary hair loss continue to lose hair without treatment. A woman who inherits the genes for hereditary hair loss may notice gradual thinning. Men who have hereditary hair loss tend to develop a receding hairline or bald patch that begins in the center of the scalp.

Tips To Prevent Hair Damage/Shedding/Loss

Hair styling without damage

How you style your hair can cause hair to look brittle, frizzy and lackluster or even fall out. Follow these tips to help style

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your hair without causing damage. Making some simple changes to your hair care can help prevent hair breakage that can eventually cause hair loss.

- Dry your hair by wrapping it in a towel after a shower or bath. Another alternative is letting your hair air-dry.
- Most people should handle wet hair as little as possible as wet hair breaks more easily when combed or brushed. However, people with tightly curled or textured hair should brush their hair when wet to decrease the chances of hair breakage.
- Allow your hair to partially air dry before you style or comb. Decreasing the number of times per week that you blow dry also helps limit damage.
- Keep brushing to minimum. Brushing your hair 100 strokes each day can cause split ends.
- Reduce the use of “long-lasting hold” styling products. Using a comb to style your hair after you apply the product can cause the hair to break and can lead to hair loss over time.
- No matter your hair type, excessive heat can damage your hair. Flat irons should be used on dry hair on a low or medium heat setting, no more than every other day. If you use a curling iron, only leave it in place for a second or two.
- Do not continuously wear braids, cornrows, ponytails and hair extensions. These styles pull on the hair and can cause tension that leads to breakage. If the tension continues, permanent hair loss can develop.

Stress Reduction

High stress levels wreak havoc on the body and nothing responds faster than one’s hair, skin and nails. Stress alone has been found to be directly correlated with increased hair loss.

- DO continue washing and brushing your hair. As you are suffering from hair loss due to stress, you might think that avoiding washing and brushing your hair is a good idea. This is 100 percent incorrect! When hair isn’t washed, oil builds up and leads to thinning hair and hair loss. Regular brushing is good for thinning hair as it stimulates blood flow in the scalp and promotes hair growth.
- DO start a regular exercise program. Exercising for a minimum of 20 minutes per day reduces stress by increasing the production of endorphins in the body. Regular exercise is also a great way to increase self-confidence and lower the symptoms associated with depression and anxiety.
- DO learn relaxation techniques will help to decrease your stress related hair loss. Learn how to relax in the wake of stress through the use of techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or guided imagery.
- DO consider trying yoga. Yoga is a discipline that includes breath control and simple meditation, both of which are great remedies for relieving stress and encouraging relaxation.
- DON’T forget to make time for yourself. It is important to be social with friends and family and not withdraw because of stress. Poor mental health will only increase your stress levels and accelerate hair loss.

References

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| Title: Do you have hair loss or hair shedding? | | Original Date: 02/15/2017 |
| Reviewed Date(s): | Revised Date(s): | Next Review Date: 02/15/2019 |