

I'm not a bot



loss can be caused by many factors, including nutrient deficiencies, stress, certain birth conditions, and changes in hormone levels. Early diagnosis and treatment may help stop hair loss and promote hair regrowth. But it can be more severe. In people assigned female at birth (AFAB), noticeable hair loss is pretty common, with around one third experiencing it at some point. However, whether its subtle thinning all over or a bare patch where the scalp can be seen, it can look different to the typical baldness you might expect. From dietary deficiencies to stress, hair loss in AFAB folks can have a number of causes. Telogen effluvium when significantly more hairs move from the growing to the shedding stage can occur after a traumatic or stressful experience, such as: childbirth, extreme weight loss, the loss of a loved one. Triggers for other types of hair loss range from inflammatory scalp conditions, like eczema, to an underlying health concern, such as an autoimmune condition. Even tight hairstyles, like ponytails or braids, can lead to hair loss as a result of putting pressure on roots. Female pattern baldness is also known as androgenetic alopecia is hair loss that affects people assigned female at birth. Female pattern baldness is usually hereditary caused by a genetically shorter hair-growing period and a longer period between the shedding and growth phases. Genes from parents may also affect the hair, causing smaller follicles and thinner strands. However, age and hormones may play a part, too, as its more common after menopause when estrogen levels reduce. This means that the effects of male androgen hormones which are linked to male pattern baldness may be greater. More androgenetic activity can also occur through an inherited form of male pattern baldness, especially during the first half of life. People should avoid medications that increase the risk for hair loss, such as isotretinoin (Accutane) and some antidepressants (Aldactone). You can get help from a dermatologist or a hair loss specialist. There are many treatments for hair loss, but the average person, though complete baldness is less likely. In male pattern baldness, hair loss starts in the front of the head and recedes to the back until the person goes bald. But female pattern baldness starts at the part line, sometimes appearing all over the head. Hair at the temples may also recede. Doctors divide the condition into three types: Type I is a small amount of thinning that starts around the part. Type II involves widening of the part and increased thinning around it. Type III is thinning throughout, with a see-through area at the top of the scalp. If you have female pattern baldness, you may be able to camouflage the hair loss at first by adopting a new hairstyle. But it often becomes too difficult to hide the thinning hair. Early diagnosis is encouraged, as it can enable you to start a treatment plan and potentially minimize future hair loss. Your treatment plan will likely consist of one or more medications approved to treat the condition. Minoxidil (Rogaine) is the only drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat female pattern baldness. Its available in 2% or 5% formulas. If possible, opt for the 5% formula older studies found that its superior. Apply minoxidil to your scalp every day. Though it won't fully restore the hair youve lost, it can grow back a significant amount of hair and give an overall thicker appearance. It can take around 6 to 12 months to see results. And youll need to keep using minoxidil to maintain the effect, or itll stop working. If this happens, your hair may return to its previous appearance. The following side effects are possible: redness, itching, hair growth on areas where you didnt want it, such as your cheeks. Finasteride (Propecia) and dutasteride (Avanair) are FDA approved treatments for male pattern hair loss, but some doctors do recommend them for women. 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2005). Cyproterone acetate inhibits gonadotropin-releasing hormones and blocks androgen receptors but is not available in the United States. The best study to investigate cyproterone acetate was a 12-month randomized trial that compared the use of topical minoxidil 2% and cyproterone acetate in 66 women with FPHL. The authors found that minoxidil 2% was more effective in women without evidence of hyperandrogenism but cyproterone acetate was more effective in women with multiple symptoms (Vexiau et al., 2002). In contrast, there is only one significant randomized study that has shown no benefit for cyproterone acetate (Carmina and Lobo, 2003). The treatment doses that were utilized vary but one of the most effective doses appears to be 100 mg/day on days 5 to 15 of the menstrual cycle and supplemented by 50 g ethinyl estradiol on days 5 to 25 (Dawber et al., 1982). However, there is insufficient evidence to date that oral hormonal treatment prevents progression or improves AGA in female patients. Nevertheless, a subgroup analysis suggests that oral cyproterone acetate may improve AGA in female patients with hyperandrogenism (Blumeyer et al., 2011). Spironolactone is the most commonly used, off-label anti-androgen for the treatment of female AGA and hirsutism. Spironolactone is a potassium-sparing diuretic and structural antagonist of aldosterone (van Zuuren et al., 2012a) and acts as an androgen antagonist by competitively blocking androgen receptors as well as inhibiting ovarian androgen production. The usual daily dose is 100 to 200 mg. The side effects of spironolactone are due partly to its additional actions as it may act as an aldosterone antagonist and cause postural hypotension, electrolyte disturbances, menstrual irregularities, fatigue, urticaria, breast tenderness, and hematologic disturbances. Because of these known side effects, blood pressure and electrolyte balance, especially in patients with comorbid conditions or concurrent potentially interactive medications, should be checked during the first few months of treatment. Published studies that support the efficacy of spironolactone are limited. An open intervention study concluded that spironolactone 200 mg/day was equally effective in either restoring hair growth or preventing further progression of hair loss compared with cyproterone acetate at a dose of either 50 mg/day or 100 mg/day for 10 days every menstrual cycle (Sinclair et al., 2005). Oral minoxidil is not often used in the treatment of AGA and FPHL, mainly because of the side effect profile at standard doses. Off-label use of oral minoxidil is known to improve hair density in the treated patients but could be complicated by postural hypotension, fluid retention, and hypertrichosis. Fluid retention can often be managed by the addition of spironolactone but has the potential to increase postural hypotension. As minoxidil side effects are all dose-related, the dose could be 0.25 mg every day (Sinclair, 2018). Low-dose oral minoxidil is usually well tolerated in the majority of patients with FPHL and a reasonable alternative in women who are intolerant of or unwilling to use topical minoxidil (Sinclair, 2018). The benefit of oral supplementation with amino acids, biotin, zinc, and other micronutrients in hair loss of any origin is controversial. For patients with TE, oral supplementation with L-cystine and B-complex vitamins showed a normalization of the anagen hair rate in a TrichoScan analysis but the effectiveness for FPHL is doubtful (Singal et al., 2013). Rasheed et al. (2013) examined the relation between insufficiency/deficiency of serum ferritin and vitamin D and between TE or FPHL and demonstrated relation in both conditions. There are several mechanisms by which both iron and vitamin D have possible effects on hair growth. As the role of iron and ferritin levels increase in nondividing cells, rapidly proliferating cells such as hair follicle matrix cells have lower levels of ferritin and higher levels of free iron. This balance of ferritin and iron is partially controlled by the transcription factor c-Myc (Rasheed et al., 2013). Overexpression of c-Myc in the cutaneous epithelium results in a loss of follicular differentiation and decrease in stem cells but whether this phenotype is related to an abnormal iron metabolism remains to be determined. Furthermore, iron acts as a metabolic cofactor for ribonucleotide reductase, which is the rate-limiting enzyme for DNA synthesis of hair growth stems. Therefore, the depletion of iron results in the inhibition of proliferation. Vitamin D has been suggested as an optimal concentration of this micronutrient that is necessary to delay aging phenomena including hair loss. Data from animal models show that vitamin D receptor activation plays an important role in anagen initiation and recent data suggested that vitamin D receptors regulate the expression of genes that are required for hair follicle cycling (Amor et al., 2010, Demay, 2012). Also, the definition of iron deficiency in hair loss remains an important question because some studies suggest that with a serum ferritin level of 30 g/L and active hair loss, patients should be treated with iron therapy. However, other studies suggest higher cutoff limits such as 40 g/L and 70 g/L or lower cutoff limits such as 10 g/L to 15 g/L (Bregy and Trueb, 2008, Deloche et al., 2007, Rushion and Ramsay, 1992). Other ingredients such as saw palmetto (Nutrafol) or marine protein complexes (Viviscal) may have anti-androgenic and anti-inflammatory properties but their efficacy alone as a monotherapy needs more investigation. Hair transplantation is an important option for patients over 25 years of age with FPHL who do not have success with medical therapies when the hair loss has been stabilized (Atanaskova Mesinkovska and Bergfeld, 2013). Hair transplantation involves the relocation or transfer of hairs from the occipital to the bald area. Ideal surgical candidates for hair transplantation are women with high hair density in the donor site over the occipital scalp and extensive hair loss or thinning of the frontal scalp. Follicular unit hair transplantation is a surgical treatment of baldness in which follicular units of hair (consisting of naturally occurring bundles of hairs) are dissected under a stereomicroscope and transplanted in the bald area to give a natural look. The procedure is performed under local anesthesia whereby one session involves the transplantation of 800 to 1200 grafts. Thanks to the use of follicular unit transplantation, the technique has become much less invasive and produces natural, undetectable, and reproducible results. The most common problems that are encountered in hair transplantation in women are related to insufficient hair donor areas, the need for magnification to insert the grafts between the existing hair follicles in the recipient area, and temporary worsening of global aspect after the transplant. To achieve a good result, the correct selection of ideal candidates is important for this procedure. A new trend in hair transplantations is the adjunct use of PRP. The growth factors and plasma components can be injected directly into the scalp before placement of the grafts or the hair grafts may be stored in PRP until placed on the scalp (Carter et al., 2011, Rose, 2011). Moreover, robotic systems can select and remove individual hair follicles from the donor area with great precision and without fatigue (Pereira et al., 2016). Despite the high prevalence of FPHL, its management still imposes several difficulties to dermatologists' clinical practice. The investigation must be improved to identify the potential elements (other than genetic and hormonal) that are involved in the pathogenesis of FPHL. These findings are needed to develop new and more effective therapies to prevent and reverse the diseases course. Since the response to treatment of FPHL is a challenge for dermatologists, new data with regard to the epidemiology, genetics, and pathophysiology of FPHL may help to improve the quality of life of patients affected by this disease. Amor K.T., Rashid R.M., Mirmirani P. Does D matter? The role of vitamin D in hair disorders and hair follicle cycling. Dermatol Online J. 2010;16:3. 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