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Hair Loss Solutions...Bonafide Cures or Bald Face Lies?

Although hair loss may not seem as important a health concern as cancer or heart disease, it can be very traumatic for those persons who experience it. By becoming knowledgeable about hair loss and its causes, and by seeking the services of a qualified professional, hair loss can many times be remedied, or at least controlled. This article explores the world of hair loss.

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PART 1

Very much a highlighted news topic, the stem cell research controversy continues. Reasons for the "need" of research include possible help for persons with terminal cancer, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury...and hair loss.

Hair loss is an important subject for the many men and women who experience it. The careless remarks and gratuitous jokes about baldness made by people with full heads of hair only add to their humiliation. Some people even experience anger that their hairline threatens to become as receded as the waters of the Red Sea for the Hebrews so many years ago.

Countless people wonder whether or not there really exists a cure for hair loss. Before we answer that question, we should first answer the questions, "*What is hair loss?*" and "*What causes it?*"

What is Hair Loss?

The term "Alopecia, more commonly known as "baldness," includes various disorders that involve the lack of hair where it would normally grow; especially when it involves the head. The most common form of baldness is a progressive hair-thinning condition that occurs in some adults.

Each piece of hair has a follicle located at the end of the hair shaft. Follicles act as the hair's incubator; it is where the hair is produced. Each strand of hair has a matrix, located at the base of the follicle. Cells in this area produce keratin, a tough protein that makes up the hair shaft, and melanin. Melanin stains the keratin, giving hair its color.

The activity of each follicle is dependant on surrounding follicles. Healthy hair follicles continuously grow. About 85% of the hair follicles on a healthy scalp are actively growing at the same time, and hair loss is not a problem.

Each strand of hair continues to grow for about 4 years, before going into a dormant period of about 4 months. On an average, only about 15% of the total amount of hair follicles on a healthy scalp is dormant at any one time. It is when a higher percentage of hair follicles stop growing at one time that hair loss becomes a problem.

What Happens During Hair Loss

Follicles are nourished by a network of capillaries, bringing nutrients to the base of the follicle. The amount of blood available to the scalp and to the follicles is determined by the health of the capillaries in the scalp, as well as the arteries in the neck and temple.

Problems develop when hair follicles do not receive proper nourishment. For instance, some women experience noticeable hair thinning after menopause, after the production of estrogen slows down or stops. Hair loss in women is usually more diffuse than in men. Women seldom have bald spots; a large area of the head may show sparse hair growth instead. Only about 15% of women are afflicted by such a high degree of hair loss that it becomes obvious.

In men the hormone DHT can harm hair follicles, making them shrink, or cause them to prematurely enter into the resting stage of the hair cycle. When this happens the result is often the characteristic U-shaped pattern of hair loss at the top of the head.

What Causes Hair Loss?

Predisposition can be one factor as to why one person begins losing their hair as they age, while another person does not. Various other disorders, such as obesity, allergies, and diabetes can also be attributed to predisposition. Sometimes hair loss can be the result of side effects caused by certain prescription drugs. Of course, these factors can often be countered.

Where you may not be able to reverse predisposition, you can sometimes contain it. By changing lifestyle, maintaining a customized healthcare regimen, and eating a well-balanced diet, many such factors can be alleviated or turned around.

More about Hair Loss

When it comes counteracting or slowing down the process of hair loss, products such as Rogaine, Dutasteride, and Propecia can help. Scalp exercises and massages using special preparations can also help.

Telogen Effluvium (TE) is a type of hair loss more common in women than men. It is characterized by high numbers of hairs that enter into the resting stage of the hair cycle, all at one time. This usually causes profuse shedding, as opposed to bald patches. This can be an overwhelming experience for women, especially those who once had luxuriant hair.

TE can be brought on by prolonged emotional or physical stress, severe illness, post-pregnancy hormone changes, or crash dieting. Once the triggering factor has been removed, TE hair loss usually stops. Hair can grow back in even without treatment, usually in 6 months to a year.

With proper treatment, hair growth can be accelerated. Some professionals recommend bringing the level of iron stored in the body up to 70 or 80 ng/ml (nanograms per milliliter). The range of iron normally stored in a woman's body might be between 12 ?50; the lower end not high enough to speed hair growth.

Rogaine can also be used for a few months to start the TE recovery process; once hair does begin to grow back in, Rogaine use can stop.

As mentioned earlier, crash dieting can trigger TE in both men and women. As a matter of fact, diets of less than 1,200 calories a day can trigger sudden hair loss. This is especially true of diets low in protein. When the body lacks proper protein it "borrows" by shifting healthy hairs into dormancy to conserve protein.

Although hair loss resulting from inadequate diets is most often temporary, it can result in permanent loss of hair in persons genetically predetermined towards hair loss. Also, extreme weight loss in men can increase the production of androgens ?male sex hormones that kill hair follicles. Once hair follicles are destroyed, there can be no re-growth of hair.

In part-2 we of this article we discuss effective treatments for hair loss and where to go for help. Visit [Writers Write Now](#) for part 2, "What can be done about Hair Loss.?"

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