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# Alopecia

## Alopecia (Hair Loss)

Alopecia can have many causes. The two main types of hair loss are those associated with or without scarring. A dermatologist receives training in the diagnosis and treatment of these disorders of hair growth.

### Scarring Alopecia

#Infections due to Staph infection or fungal infection are the most common.

#Autoimmune diseases such as lupus, lichen planus and other serious medical conditions are occasional causes of hair loss.

#Scarring alopecia can also be of unknown causation.

Biopsies of the scalp usually must be done to distinguish between causes of scarring hair loss.

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## Nonscarring Alopecia

#Hereditary pattern baldness is the common type of baldness seen in men beginning as early as their teens and progressing to nearly total hair loss. A hereditary form of hair loss is also seen in women but doesn't usually progress to total hair loss. Rather a thinning of the hair on top of the scalp is the usual presentation beginning around menopause. Prescription medications are used for these types of hair loss with varying degrees of success.

#Telogen effluvium is the term used for a temporary hair loss usually occurring after a physical stress such as childbirth, surgery or trauma. This type hair loss can also be seen in association with low thyroid or low iron levels, so these blood tests should be checked.

#Anagen effluvium is the term used for permanent thinning or hair loss after radiation or chemotherapy in which the sensitive growing cells in the hair root are damaged. This type of hair loss is usually permanent.

#Alopecia areata is a condition in which hair loss occurs in round patches, leaving only the white hairs remaining. One or a few patches of alopecia on the scalp is the most common presentation; however, more widespread hair loss can occur, involving the entire scalp or eyebrows, eyelashes or beard. In rare cases, all the hair is lost, called alopecia universalis. This condition is believed to be due to an autoimmune attack by the person's white blood cells against the growing hair cells. Injections of cortisone into the patch of alopecia usually clears the condition. Occasionally, this type of alopecia becomes chronic with bouts of hair loss every few months.