

# Hair loss:

## *more than skin deep*

Hair loss is a common issue among men and women alike. The U.S. National Library of Medicine says about 50 million men and 30 million women have some degree of hair loss or baldness. Most of the time, this is due to hereditary hair loss.

Sometimes, however, hair loss is a sign of a health problem. Hair loss can sometimes be caused by:

- Thyroid problems
- Diabetes
- Low iron in the blood (anemia)
- Prostate cancer in men
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) in women

Hair loss doesn't always mean you have a serious illness. Sometimes hair falls out for a little while and then starts to grow back. Some of the reasons this happens include:

- Hair breakage from chemicals like perms and hair color
- Hairstyles that pull on the hair, such as tight ponytails and braids
- A stressful event, such as a death in the family
- Stress on the body from major surgery, childbirth or some illnesses



- Brushing hair too hard or too often
- Some prescription medicines, including those for arthritis, cancer, depression, gout, heart disease and high blood pressure
- Hormone changes, such as during pregnancy or menopause

If you notice sudden hair loss, it's important to find out the cause. If you notice large amounts of hair falling out when combing or washing your hair, or thinning or bald spots, make an appointment with your doctor.

### Common hair loss treatments

Knowing the cause of your hair loss is the first step to treatment. For instance, if iron levels are low, your doctor may recommend an iron supplement. Treatments for common hereditary hair loss include:

- Topical minoxidil (brand name Rogaine, which can be purchased in stores)
- Finasteride (prescription medicine for men only)
- Topical or oral estrogen or other hormones (prescription for women only)
- Hair transplant surgery

*Source: American Academy of Dermatology*