Alopecia Areata: Losing Your Hair? Don’t Despair

There are treatments and support for women with hair loss from alopecia areata.

Alopecia areata (patchy): one or more bold patches on the scalp or other places on the body.

Alopecia totiis: hair loss all over the head.

Alopecia universalis: hair loss that affects the whole body, including facial hair, eyelashes, eyebrows and pubic hair.

Who gets alopecia?

Approximately 6.8 million people in the U.S. have or will develop alopecia areata in their lifetime. Women and men are about equally likely to be diagnosed with alopecia areata.

Did you know?

20% of people with alopecia areata have a close family member with it. Alopecia areata may be associated with other autoimmune conditions or can be triggered by stress.

TREATMENTS FOR ALOPECIA AREATA

In 30% to 50% of cases, people with alopecia areata spontaneously regrow hair within six to 12 months without any treatment.

There is no cure for hair loss that doesn’t grow back on its own, but there are treatments that can help stimulate hair follicles.

Treatment options may include:

- Cortisone injections
- Topical medicines, such as calcipotriene and minoxidil
- Contact immunotherapy, a topical medicine that may prevent your immune system from attacking hair follicles
- Prescription medications, such as a drug used for glaucoma that can help eyelashes grow
- Topical medicines, such as corticosteroids and minoxidil
- A new class of medication called JAK inhibitors shows promise in helping treat alopecia areata.

Women vs. Men

Women and men may respond differently to hair loss.

Women may find it easier to lose body hair.

Women may find it easier to use makeup to address loss of eyebrows or eyelashes.

Being bald may be more socially acceptable and easier for men.

Women and their healthcare providers (HCPs) may perceive alopecia areata differently. A woman who loses a patch of hair may experience it as severe hair loss, but an HCP may see this as mild because it’s only one patch.

Speak up about the impact your hair loss has on your emotional well-being.

Protect your exposed skin from the cold or the sun—use sunscreen on your scalp or wear a hat to avoid sunburn.

Seek treatment from a board-certified dermatologist who is trained to diagnose and treat alopecia areata.

Protect your eyes if you’ve lost your eyelashes or eyebrows.

ADVICE FOR WOMEN WITH ALOPECIA AREATA

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- Protect your eyes if you’ve lost your eyelashes or eyebrows.

The National Alopecia Areata Foundation provides resources, support groups and one-on-one phone support to help with the emotional and mental health effects of hair loss.

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