

Healthy Hair

Over-processing hair is a very common cause of hair loss and breakage in women. Coloring hair (even semi-permanent) more than every 10-12 weeks damages hair, causing it to become thin, brittle and lifeless. **PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS** can also cause hair loss in both men and women. **Testosterone and thyroid deficiency** (or **thyroid excess**) can cause hair to become finer, losing body, wave and shine. Hair becomes dry and brittle, breaking easily. The scalp becomes dry and may flake or itch. Like other cells in the body, skin and hair follicles require adequate levels of hormones to remain healthy. Even after a patient receives hormones, the damaged hairs may continue to 'fall out'. When thyroid deficiency or excess is corrected, it may take months to see the new hair growth. With testosterone therapy, the skin and scalp become healthier within days to weeks and new hair growth is noticeable within a month.

Some people may be confused over the term 'androgenic alopecia'. This refers to male pattern baldness and is not usually associated with testosterone or androgen excess. Alopecia, or hair loss, in postmenopausal women is NOT associated with androgen excess. In fact, at the Millennium Wellness Center we see the most significant hair changes in women who are **testosterone deficient**. In fact, 63% of patients with 'thinning' hair report hair re-growth on testosterone pellet therapy. In rare cases, some pre-menopausal women with extremely high levels of androgens may experience hair loss if they genetically convert testosterone to DHT in the hair follicle. Very *rarely*, a woman on testosterone therapy, who has this same enzyme system, may lose hair if levels get *too high*.

Healthy Hair Recommendations:

1. Most important: HORMONE BALANCE (testosterone, thyroid)
 - a. ***Too much thyroid medication is a common cause of hair thinning****
2. Avoid chemicals (Chlorine, permanents, color) and harsh shampoo on hair.
3. Check 'side effects' of medications for hair loss
4. Diet: whole foods (fat and protein) eggs, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables
 - a. Avoid 'processed' carbohydrates, sugars and processed protein drinks
 - b. **Insulin resistance is associated with hair loss in men and women**
5. Supplements (Most of these nutrients are found in **eggs and nuts!**)
 - a. **Iron (45 mg slow release)**, if iron deficient. (Optimal iron \geq 80 ug)
 - b. Iodine, *if* iodine deficient.
 - c. Minimal data to support the following supplements:
 - i. Biotin 5-8 mg per day, Zinc, L-lysine
 - ii. Essential fatty acids (Nordic Natural Fish Oil Capsules, Flax seed)
 - iii. Absorbable silica (5 drops per day)
6. Avoid excessive supplements including **processed protein drinks**
 - a. 'Excessive intakes of nutritional supplements may actually cause hair loss and are not recommended in the absence of a proven deficiency' (Rushton 02).
7. Topical Minoxidil (Rogaine) OTC
8. Exercise
9. Stress reduction (**STRESS**, including surgery and anesthesia, is a common cause of hair loss)
10. Water softener (hard water strips oils from hair making it dry and brittle)
11. Avoid dry heat. Humidifier in the winter

* A common cause of hair loss in our practice is **too much thyroid hormone**. Often TSH is < 0.5 . Restoring hormone balance, with testosterone, helps the thyroid to function better by freeing up more thyroid hormone. Thyroid doses may have to be lowered.