

## Hair Loss (Alopecia)

Hair loss can affect just your scalp or your entire body, and it can be temporary or permanent. It can be the result of heredity, hormonal changes, medical conditions, hairstyling, stress or a normal part of aging. There are many different types of hair loss and based on the type of hair loss you are experiencing, different treatment options. Unfortunately, there is no “cure” for hair loss, but with careful consideration and compliance with the regiment your doctor recommends, you can see hair regrowth.

### Diagnosing:

Before making a diagnosis on the type of hair loss you are experiencing and discussing treatment options, we will do a physical exam and ask about your diet, your hair care routine, and your medical and family history.

- **We might also do some tests:**

- **Blood test:** This might help uncover medical conditions that can cause hair loss.
- **Pull test:** Your doctor gently pulls several dozen hairs to see how many come out. This helps determine the stage of the shedding process.
- **Scalp biopsy:** Your doctor scrapes samples from the skin or from a few hairs plucked from the scalp to examine the hair roots under a microscope.

### Treatment Options:

#### **Over-the-Counter Medications:**

- Minoxidil 5% [Solution](#)/[Foam](#) (Rogaine):
  - Minoxidil works by increasing blood flow (vasodilation) to hair follicles which elongating the growth phase of the follicle. For the best chance of preventing further loss, Minoxidil should be used every day. It can take 4-6 months to notice a slowing in hair loss and even longer to see hair regrowth.
  - Side effects: There is the possible side effect of temporary and reversible increased shedding, scalp irritation, and hypertrichosis.
  - Instructions: Apply Minoxidil to a dry scalp on the areas affected by hair loss. It may help to part your hair in several places so that the Minoxidil can easily come into contact with your scalp. Using your fingers, massage the Minoxidil solution into your scalp. After you’ve finished applying the Minoxidil solution, wash your hands thoroughly to remove any remaining Minoxidil from your skin.

#### **Prescription Oral Medications:**

- **Minoxidil Oral (Rogaine):** If Minoxidil topical is ineffective, your doctor can prescribe it orally. While Minoxidil is not FDA approved to treat alopecia, the systemic vasodilator is known to increase hair growth. For the best results, take Minoxidil as prescribed by your doctor.
- **Finasteride (Propecia):** Finasteride is a treatment for men. It works by blocking the body's production of a male hormone in the scalp that stops hair growth. It may take at least 3 months before you see any improvement, but you should expect to see improvement during the first 12 months of your treatment.
- **Spironolactone:** Spironolactone is a treatment for women. Spironolactone slows down the production of androgens. These are male sex hormones, including testosterone. Reduced production of androgens



can slow down the progression of hair loss caused by androgenic alopecia. It can also encourage hair to regrow. For hair loss, your doctor will likely prescribe a daily dose of 100 to 200 milligrams. Most people need to take it for at least six months before they start seeing results. Others might not notice any benefits until they've taken it for at least a year.

#### **Low level laser light (cold laser) therapy:**

Low level laser light therapy is frequently combined with other treatments as a safe, non-invasive, non-hormonal, FDA approved approach to hair regrowth. It utilizes a specific wavelength of light to penetrate the skin, decrease inflammation and alter cellular signaling cascades to increase hair growth.

- Recommended brands include [Theradome](#) (sold in office), [Hairmax](#) and [Capillus](#).

#### **Supplements:**

This is an emerging field in hair rejuvenation. Supplements utilize natural minerals and botanical extracts to correct nutritional deficiencies, hormonal imbalances, decrease inflammation, reduce free-radical damage, and alter pathways contributing to hair loss. To determine if you have any nutritional deficiencies or hormonal imbalances, your doctor may recommend blood work.

- Popular brands: [Nutrafol](#), the only clinically proven supplement to increase hair growth (sold in our office), and [Viviscal](#).

#### **Steroid treatments:**

##### **Topical steroids:**

- Topical steroids treat inflammation of the hair follicle which may be contributing to hair loss. Topical steroid may come in a cream or solution form. It is typically recommended that you use the steroid twice a day for two weeks followed up one week off treatment.

##### **ILK:**

- Intralesional Kenalog is a liquid steroid (triamcinolone) that can be injected into areas experiencing hair loss. This is a medical procedure performed in our office. These injections work by stopping the body's own immune system from harming the hair follicles; therefore, this treatment is only effective for individuals whose hair loss is caused by the immune system. On average, we recommend monthly treatments for the best results.

#### **PRP:**

Platelet rich plasma (PRP) is a cutting-edge technology that utilizes the body's own growth factors, concentrates them, and applies them to the scalp to catalyze hair growth. This is an aesthetic procedure performed in our office and is not covered by insurance. For more information see our [PRP for Hair Loss FAQs](#) document.

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