

Alopecia



One term. Many causes. Care starts with understanding why.

Understanding hair loss

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01 What alopecia means

Alopecia is the medical term for hair loss. It can affect the scalp, beard or other body areas and may appear as thinning, shedding or patches. It is not one diagnosis: the cause determines whether hair can regrow and which care or treatment may help. [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

Possible contributors [2](#), [4](#), [5](#)

- Inherited pattern hair loss
- Immune-related follicle changes
- Repeated pulling or tension
- Illness, medicines or nutritional issues

02 Three care priorities

- 1 Find the cause early**
See a dermatologist for new or ongoing hair loss. Your history and scalp examination help determine whether tests or treatment are needed. [3](#)
- 2 Reduce tension and damage**
Loosen styles that pull. Avoid painful braids or extensions, limit heat, and detangle gently to protect fragile hair. [5](#), [6](#)
- 3 Choose a tailored plan**
Treatment depends on the diagnosis. Discuss benefits and risks with your clinician; do not assume a hair-growth supplement is necessary or harmless. [3](#), [6](#)

03 Types worth understanding

Pattern hair loss

Androgenetic alopecia is inherited and commonly causes gradual thinning. [2](#), [1](#)
It differs from sudden shedding after illness or major stress.

Alopecia areata

An autoimmune condition in which the immune system attacks hair follicles. [4](#), [1](#)
It can affect scalp or body hair; it is not the name for every type of alopecia.

Traction & scarring

Repeated pulling can cause traction alopecia. Scarring disorders destroy follicles. [5](#), [2](#)
Some hair loss becomes permanent, making early assessment important.

Protect fragile hair. Use a gentle shampoo and moisturizing conditioner, and avoid rough brushing. These steps reduce damage; they do not replace treatment for the cause of hair loss. Ask about testing before taking supplements. [6](#), [3](#)

Educational, not diagnostic. Arrange prompt assessment for sudden or patchy loss, scalp pain or inflammation, or suspected scarring.

Sources & product details

Sources checked 2026-09-14

- 1. [DermNet: Hair loss overview](#)
- 2. [AAD: Causes of hair loss](#)
- 3. [AAD: Diagnosis & treatment](#)
- 4. [AAD: Alopecia areata causes](#)
- 5. [AAD: Hairstyles & traction alopecia](#)
- 6. [AAD: Hair loss self-care](#)