

BEAUTY DISSECTED

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Hair loss: Prevention and cure

HAIR loss, decreased hair density and baldness can be a very big and frustrating problem. We hear a lot about hair restoration treatment, but are not sure what it means. It's a combination of treatments given for different types of hair related problems.

Hair fall is the commonest complain that I get. Patients from all age groups, but mostly young people, come to me with this problem. In most cases I find that the complaints are due to very basic problems like lack of proper hair care and proper diet.

After talking to patients, I often find that they do not wash their hair properly or do not use the proper kind of shampoo. On the contrary, they believe that shampooing is one of the causes of hair loss. If you do not wash your hair regularly the hair follicles or roots will get clogged by dust and oil, causing the hair to become weak and it will fall off.

Our scalp has sweat glands and oil glands, which has levels of secretions that vary from person to person. Sweat combined with oil can cause the hair to become sticky and lifeless, especially now that summer is coming. Care should be taken to wash hair with an appropriate

shampoo, i.e., oil free shampoo for oily hair, normal shampoo for normal hair etc.

Normally a person should wash their hair every two days and use a conditioner twice weekly. Remember the conditioner is supposed to be applied to the hair not scalp; keep it for 2-3 minutes and wash it off. If you like to use oil, massage it and keep for an hour or two and wash it off.

These are all part of basic hair care. Remember shampoo does not cause hair fall unless you are using some strong shampoo which does not suit you.

Diet also plays a big role in hair care. Definitely a healthy diet with all food groups in adequate amounts is needed. Weird diets cause hair to lose its lustre, strength and growth. Smoking also plays a big role in hair loss. I always ask my patients to take a portion of fresh vegetables and fruits and also to add some nuts to their diet. Too much foods containing artificial colours, flavours, oil etc. can also contribute to hair loss.

There are of course patients who do have problems related to scalp or other medical ailments, which can cause hair loss. This can be a very simple problem of dandruff to some hormone related problems, but whatever it is, it needs to be identified and dealt

with.

Dandruff can easily be cured by using the appropriate antidandruff shampoo. Sometimes stronger shampoos or hair solutions containing medications are needed for complex cases. If there is any other problem, the specialist will examine the scalp, advise for tests, and treat accordingly.

Treatment can be given through medication, hair care advice and sometimes laser stimulation. The consulting doctor will decide on what they want to use. Laser hair combing will stimulate the scalp where follicles are present for hair growth. If follicles are not present it will not work.

There are patients who come with different stages of baldness or reduced density of hair. Usually they are young male adults ranging from age 20 to 35 years. After examining their pattern of baldness it is usually found that they suffer from male pattern baldness or androgenetic alopecia. This is a common cause of baldness in young male adults due to presence of androgenetic receptors in the frontal hair follicles.

Medical treatment is available if the patient comes when the density starts reducing. Usually receding hairline is the first

sign of baldness. This usually progresses quickly. Also there are female patients around the age of 40-50 years who are developing reduced density on the frontal area of the scalp, this is due to hormonal imbalance during pre-menopause. This type of baldness can be treated by surgical procedure known as Hair Transplant.

It is considered the most effective treatment for baldness all over the world. It's a procedure in which hair follicles are implanted into the bald areas by different methods. Hair follicles are taken from the back of the head which is known as the permanent zone, as follicles in this area does not contain any androgenetic receptors. This hair starts growing after 4-6 months and grows as normal natural hair.

No special maintenance is needed for this procedure. It is considered to be a very safe and successful way of treating baldness. As many of us are aware many celebrities like Salman Khan have opted for this procedure.

Doctors all over the world and also in Bangladesh follow the same procedure with positive results. There are no side effects to the procedure as the patient's own hair is used. No special maintenance is required to take care of the implanted hair.

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