

## **The fine line between hair and hair loss**

Our hair - that ally that gives us security, image and style and is a true reflection of how we are and how we feel - can turn against us at any time.

When **hair loss** is **greater than normal**, we talk about alopecia. There are different types of alopecia, according to the factors that trigger it. The general public is poorly informed about this condition.

Alopecia can appear at any stage of life, even at a very early age. Its onset can lead to different degrees of **psychological impact**, which can be exacerbated by confusion and by not knowing what to do.

**Today**, we have many ways of alleviating this problem by preventing and treating hair loss in both men and women.

Remember that in many types of alopecia (nonscarring alopecia), the hair follicles are not destroyed. In these types, the follicle remains alive and it is sometimes possible for the hair to recover. Androgenetic alopecia, alopecia areata, different types of effluvium and temporary hair loss belong in this category of alopecia.

**The belief still persists, particularly among men, that baldness is a natural state and therefore has no remedy.**

This is incorrect because there are now **alternatives** for slowing down the process of hair loss. For this reason, **prevention**, is very important, especially in people who suffer from hair loss at an **early age**.

**Women and hair loss:  
Do you know some of the causes?**

There are **common factors** that cause hair loss in **both sexes**, such as hormonal changes, age and heredity, which cause androgenetic alopecia.

**The causes or factors that may influence hair loss in women are even more complex than in men.**

There are many **factors** that can affect not only hair loss, but also the **density** and **strength** of the hair. These include **nutrition, lifestyle, stress**, etc.

Androgenetic alopecia in both men and women produces a change in the scalp hair. It becomes miniaturized, the hair bulb and shaft become smaller, and the follicle produces fine, small-diameter hair (vellus hair).

In **women**, this type of alopecia tends to follow the **female pattern**, which manifests as diffuse hair loss but with the frontal part of the hair remaining intact.

There are usually **2 main peaks** that mark the **beginning** of this type of **hair loss**.

- One when the woman is in her **twenties**.
- One at around the **age of 40** (beginning of hormonal changes) until the onset of the **menopause**.

**Androgenetic alopecia** is **not** the **only cause** of hair loss in women. There are **other transitory factors** that affect **hair loss**. These include anxiety, depression, taking oral contraceptives, emotional trauma, iron-deficiency anaemia, post-partum stress and the menopause.

In the **period prior to the menopause**, women's hormones are in real turmoil (13% of pre-menopausal women suffer from frontal and parietal hair loss, compared to 37% of post-menopausal women).

**A boy looks at his father and asks,  
“Will I go bald too?”**

Obviously, you inherit a whole set of **genes** from your parents, including those linked to the hair growth cycle. So when men ask themselves this question, they look at their fathers and grandfathers. If the father and grandfather are bald, the son will have a much greater chance of going bald.

**Androgenetic alopecia** is directly related to the action of dihydrotestosterone (a male hormone present in **both sexes**) on the hair follicle, which shortens the hair growth cycle and produces increasingly fine, weak hair that eventually falls out.

In men, this type of alopecia tends to follow the **male pattern**, which is defined by initial hair loss occurring at the front hairline. The process subsequently affects the crown and then extends to the rest of the head (leaving the occipital area unaffected).

The **age** at which this process appears in men is **before the age of 30** in the first peak and after the **age of 40** in the second peak.

**Men who start to lose their hair between the ages of 20 and 30 have a greater chance of losing more hair than those who experience hair loss at a later stage.**

## Does race affect hair loss?

As well as the strong influence of sex on hair loss, a relationship has been observed between hair loss and **race**, which shows that **Caucasians** have a **higher incidence** of hair loss compared to people of other races (Asian, African, Native American).

We can state that there is a close relationship between hair loss and the different **rac**es.

Not all races follow the same **age** patterns in terms of hair loss. One example is the fact that in the United States, androgenetic alopecia affects 50% of Caucasian men and women over the age of 40.

As mentioned above, **Caucasians** show the highest propensity for hair loss - considerably higher than other races. This is especially true in **men**.

- Caucasian men are **4 times more likely** to suffer from alopecia at an earlier age than men of **African** extraction.
- The **Japanese** develop androgenetic alopecia approximately a decade later than Caucasians and its prevalence is 1.4 times lower in each 10-year age bracket.
- The prevalence of androgenetic alopecia in **Korean** men is lower than among **Caucasians**. Furthermore, female-pattern alopecia, which occurs very rarely in men, is more frequent among Koreans.
- **Asian, Native-American** and **African-American** men have a greater chance of keeping the front part of their hair and, when they do suffer from hair loss, baldness has been shown to be less extensive.