

Myths regarding hair loss

- Vitamin and protein supplements will altogether stop hair loss.
- Hair loss is more severe in men than in women.
- Stress leads to permanent hair loss.
- Shampooing, perms, hair spray, and hair colouring will cause more hair loss.

Facts regarding hair loss

- There is typically a three-month delay between a triggering event and the onset of hair loss.
- Hormonal causes of hair loss are uncommon.
- Hair loss can happen after pregnancy or after stopping birth control pills.
- 50% of women under 50 years old will experience hair loss, which occurs at the same rate as in men.

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Hair Loss

COMS (Centre for Obesity Management and Surgery)

What is hair loss?

Typically, you have around 100,000 hair follicles on your scalp, and it is normal to lose between 100 to 125 hairs each day. Hair loss becomes problematic when these lost hairs are not sufficiently replaced or when shedding happens more rapidly than usual.



What causes hair loss after Bariatric Surgery?

Hair loss is a common concern among bariatric patients following surgery, particularly during the first 3 to 4 months after surgery and can last for several months. For most patients, normal hair growth resumes within 6 to 12 months after surgery as the body adjusts and recovers. This phenomenon occurs due to several factors associated with rapid weight loss and the physiological changes the body undergoes after surgery.

+ Nutritional Deficiencies

Bariatric surgery can significantly reduce the absorption of essential nutrients. Key nutrients such as protein, iron, zinc, and vitamins (especially B12, biotin, and folate) are crucial for healthy hair growth. A deficiency in these nutrients can disrupt the normal hair growth cycle, leading to hair thinning and loss.

+ Rapid Weight Loss

The body views rapid weight loss as a form of stress, which can trigger more hair loss. About 2 to 3 months after surgery, hair loss may occur temporarily, but it usually resolves on its own.

+ Hormonal Changes

Weight loss and diet changes can affect hormone levels. Hormones such as thyroid hormones and sex hormones play a role in hair growth, and any imbalances can contribute to hair loss.

+ Surgical Stress

The stress of surgery itself can shock hair follicles into the resting phase of the hair growth cycle, where it stops growing.



How to manage hair loss?

+ Nutritional Supplements

To prevent or reduce hair loss, you should take the recommended supplements prescribed by your doctor. This often includes supplements for iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and vitamin D.

+ Protein Intake

Adequate protein intake is crucial as hair is primarily made up of protein. Patients are usually advised to consume around 60-80 grams of protein per day.

+ Regular Monitoring

Regular blood tests to monitor nutrient levels can identify and address any deficiencies early, potentially reducing the impact on hair health.

+ Stress Management

Since stress can exacerbate hair loss, adopting stress management techniques such as meditation, gentle exercise, and adequate sleep can be beneficial.

+ Patience and Support

Understanding the causes of hair loss can help you align your expectations. You can seek support by talking to your loved ones or other patients in a bariatric support group.

+ Prescription medication

Your doctor might prescribe you oral Biotin, Vitamin B7, which supports the health of your nails, skin, and hair. Alternatively, agents like Minoxidil when applied on the scalp can promote hair growth. These treatments may not show immediate results and hence, you should track gradual progress to stay motivated.