

WOMEN'S
HEALTH

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Hair today... gone tomorrow

Your ponytail feels thinner, your parting looks wider, more hair is gathering in the shower drain. Sound familiar? You're not alone.

Many women experience changes in their hair during perimenopause — and at other hormone-shifting times, like after having a baby.

In fact, studies suggest that around 40–50% of women notice some degree of hair thinning by menopause. The good news? These changes are common, explainable, and there are things you can do to help.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Oestrogen (one of our main female hormones) helps keep hair in its growing phase for longer. As oestrogen levels start to fall (and testosterone can become

relatively more active), hair growth may slow down.

As a result, you might notice that hairs grow for a shorter time before shedding, new hairs come through finer, and individual strands become thinner as some follicles “miniaturise.”

These changes can appear as general thinning all over the scalp, or more noticeably on the crown or along your part line.

There are many causes of hair loss, and the truth is it's complex. Regrowth depends on the underlying cause. Around perimenopause, two common types of hair loss include:

- **Female pattern hair loss:**

The most common cause of thinning hair in women. It's partly genetic and linked to hormone changes, where hair follicles gradually shrink over

time. Hair becomes finer, especially around the top of the scalp.

- **Telogen effluvium:**

This occurs when many hairs shed at once, often after stress, illness, surgery, or major hormonal shifts, all of which can happen during perimenopause. The good news is that this type of shedding usually grows back once the trigger settles.

FIRST STEPS

Simple, everyday changes can make a real difference. If your hair loss is linked to a temporary trigger, you may notice regrowth within a few months.

For hormonal or patterned thinning, a combination of treatments and lifestyle habits can help slow or even partly reverse the process — but it takes patience and consistency. Most people



need at least 3–6 months to see visible improvement. While results vary from person to person, the following simple steps may help support healthier, fuller hair.

Be kind to your hair:

Avoid harsh bleach, high heat, and tight hairstyles or hairbands that pull on fragile areas. Applying a few drops of coconut, argan, or jojoba oil to the mid-lengths and ends at least twice a week can reduce dryness and add shine. Ideally, leave it on for a few hours but avoid overnight use or applying to the roots, as this can clog follicles and restrict growth.

Feed your hair from within:

Healthy hair starts with good nutrition. When your body lacks certain nutrients, it prioritises vital organs over hair, meaning follicles can weaken, leading to dryness, brittleness, slower regrowth, and increased shedding.

Aim for a balanced diet rich in protein, iron, zinc, omega-3s, and vitamin D, all of which support strong, healthy hair growth. Staying well-hydrated also helps keep your scalp and hair in good condition.

Consider blood tests to check thyroid function, iron stores (ferritin), and sometimes vitamin D, as these deficiencies are common, treatable causes of thinning.

Boost blood flow:

Regular exercise and gentle scalp massage (even 10 minutes a day) can improve circulation to the hair follicles, supporting healthy growth. Some research also suggests that caffeine, used in topical shampoos or serums, may enhance blood flow and gently stimulate follicles.

Microneedling creates tiny, controlled micro-injuries on the scalp, triggering the body's natural healing response. This boosts blood flow, stimulates follicles, and can enhance the absorption of topical treatments, making them more effective. For safety and best results, it should be performed by a trained professional, such as a dermatologist.

Minoxidil is the most proven treatment for women with thinning hair, available as a lotion or foam. It boosts blood flow, extends the growth phase, and can awaken dormant follicles, helping hair grow longer and thicker. Improvement usually appears within 4–6 months,



and ongoing use is needed to maintain results. Effectiveness depends on the type and cause of hair loss, so it's best to consult a specialist before starting.

Treat scalp conditions:

A flaky, itchy, or irritated scalp (whether from dandruff, psoriasis, or dryness) can cause inflammation that weakens hair follicles. Vigorous scratching can also lead to breakage or even increased shedding. Addressing and treating the underlying scalp issue is key to restoring balance, supporting healthy hair growth, and preventing further problems.

Support your scalp and block DHT:

Some studies suggest that pumpkin seed oil (either taken as a supplement or gently massaged into the scalp) may help with hormonal hair loss by blocking DHT, a hormone linked to follicle shrinkage.

Other options, such as DHT-blocking shampoos (for example, those containing ketoconazole, like Nizoral), may also support scalp health and reduce hair thinning.

That said, be cautious with marketing claims. There are countless serums, supplements, and “miracle” hair growth kits out there. Some may help, but results vary. Before spending heavily, look for evidence-based products or ask a dermatologist for guidance. Often, simple, consistent care and proven treatments make the biggest difference.

Manage stress:

Hair loss and stress often go hand in

hand. If you're struggling to cope, speak with a doctor or specialist for support.

HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) could be an option:

Oestrogen helps support the hair's natural growth phase, and some women notice improved hair thickness when using HRT. However, everyone responds differently, and it's not a guaranteed fix. It's best to discuss your options with a menopause specialist.

When to get checked

If you've tried the basics for six months or more with little improvement, it's worth seeing a hormone specialist or dermatologist, who focus on hair and scalp conditions. They can provide a more detailed diagnosis and discuss advanced options, such as anti-androgen medications or other targeted treatments, which need specialist guidance and regular monitoring.

My Take-Home

Perimenopausal hair thinning is very common — and there's a lot you can do to help. With the right mix of healthy habits, gentle care, good nutrition, and targeted treatments, your hair can gradually regain its strength and shine.

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