

# Alopecia

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Alopecia areata is a sudden hair loss. It usually occurs on the scalp, often in rounded patches. Sometimes it will also affect eyebrows, eyelashes, beard, or genital areas of men and women. It is different from the normal balding pattern most often seen in men. The cause is not known but it is not contagious (cannot be given to someone else). It is possible that it is due to heredity, at least in part.

Symptoms may include:

- Circular areas of hair loss
- It is not related to a skin problem or disease that can be determined
- Not painful or itchy

{mospagebreak title=What your doctor can do}

What your doctor can do:

- Rule out other diseases or conditions.
- Treat with a special kind of light.
- Prescribe medicated ointments or lotions.
- Inject medicine into small bald patches.
- Recommend "watchful waiting" - observe the progress of the condition for a while since it may resolve itself. This will depend on the severity of the condition and what you prefer as a patient.

{mospagebreak title=What you can do}

What you can do:

- Wear a wig or hair piece until the condition resolves.
- Depending on severity, a new hairstyle or hat may be all that is needed.
- If the condition causes you a great deal of discomfort, discuss treatment options with your doctor.

What you can expect:

- Alopecia areata usually resolves within 1-3 years.
- Small, rough hairs may be noticed growing around the outside of the bald patch.
- The new hair then becomes downy and white as the patches begin to fill in.
- It will become more like your normal hair with time.
- Smaller patches tend to grow back more completely.
- The condition sometimes returns.

Contact your doctor if you suddenly begin to lose your hair.