

New therapies offer hope for minimizing hair loss in midlife women

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Hair loss in middle-aged females is common, affecting up to two-thirds of women after menopause. The exact reasons remain unclear, although evidence suggests a hormonal and genetic predisposition. A presentation

at The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, September 22-25, 2021, will address common hair loss problems and review new therapies and treatment approaches to stimulate hair growth and minimize thinning.

There are many different types of hair loss that occur with age. In some (non-scarring), the [hair follicle](#) is preserved and hair has the potential to grow back. Others (scarring) are characterized by irreversibly destroyed hair follicles that do not allow hair to be replenished. Today the term most commonly used with women is female pattern hair loss (also known as androgenetic alopecia). Although it's similar to what happens to men, hair loss patterns in women are typically different.

With female pattern hair loss, the hair's growing phase shortens and fewer hairs are in the active growing phase. Hair follicles shrink, leading hair to become thinner and finer with decreased numbers of hairs overall. Women typically report progressive ponytail thinning, increased scalp visibility, and easy sunburn. Usually there is a preservation of the frontal hairline with diffuse central thinning and accentuation of the part-line with a Christmas tree appearance.

Treatment includes daily application of topical 5% minoxidil and may take at least three months before noticeable results. Finasteride is a 5-reductase inhibitor that is FDA-approved for male hair loss. As an off-label indication, it may be effective in females, although higher doses may be required. Additional treatments include drospirenone containing OCP and spironolactone. Newer therapies emerging include platelet-rich plasma injections.

"Since some medical conditions can result in permanent [hair loss](#) and be signs of more serious illnesses or dermatologic disease, [early diagnosis](#) is important. In some cases, biopsies may be needed for an accurate diagnosis," says Dr. Alison Bruce from the Mayo Clinic who will be

making the presentation.

"Hair loss and thinning is a concern of many midlife women. Presentations that address this important topic are especially valuable and timely for [healthcare professionals](#) so they are prepared to discuss the issue with their patients," says Dr. Faubion, NAMS medical director.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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