

Conditions in adults



Postpartum Hair Loss

Important Points

- Postpartum hair loss is not permanent hair loss
- Normally around 100,000 hairs grow in the scalp and usually 50-200 hairs are shed each day
- The increased hormone levels during pregnancy make the hairs in the scalp grow more than normal
- After giving birth the hormone levels return to normal and two to three months later there is increased hair shedding which lasts for two to three months
- Hair growth will return to normal three to six months after the hair fall commenced
- Postpartum hair loss may occur with each pregnancy

What is it?

Many women will notice hair loss following pregnancy. The hormones that increase during pregnancy lead to changes in the skin and many other parts of the body. They tend to put all of the scalp hair into the growth phase of the hair cycle. That means many women notice their hair seems to grow thicker during pregnancy.

After birth of the baby many of the hairs stop growing and move into the resting phase where they remain for two or three months. When the hair cycle begins again, the hairs move back into the growth phase and the old hairs are shed all at once. The amount of shedding will vary between individuals with some women noticing the hair loss more than others. If there is already a tendency to inherited hair thinning in the family, the hair loss may be even more noticeable following the birth of the child.

The postpartum hair loss usually lasts for two to three months and then the hairs begin to regrow. In most women, the hair returns to its pre-pregnancy state.

How is it treated?

No treatment is necessary for postpartum hair loss. It is merely a temporary change in the hair growth cycle due to hormonal changes during pregnancy.

Excessive brushing will remove the hairs easily and will accelerate the hair loss that might otherwise have taken two or three months to fall out. If this happens it will not damage the hair in any way. Taking vitamins or rubbing preparations into the scalp will not make any difference. Some women notice that postpartum hair loss occurs after each pregnancy.

Further information

Your Maternal and Child Health nurse.

Your family doctor.

Your obstetrician.

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