

What To Do

About Hair Loss (Alopecia)



“My doctor told me my long hair would fall out. To prepare for this big change I got my hair cut short before treatment started. And I bought some pretty earrings. I tried to make the best of a very hard time.”

Talk with someone.

Losing your hair may be hard for you. Talk about your feelings with friends and family. Or think about joining a cancer support group. Talking can help you cope with hair loss and other changes during treatment.

Read what worked for others:

Before your hair falls out, think about how you will prepare for it. Here is what others have done:



Pat: “I took good care of my hair and just let it fall out by itself.”

- Wash your hair with a mild shampoo and gently pat it dry.
- **Don't** use hair dryers or other hair products such as gels or clips.



Candace: “I cut my hair before it fell out.”

- Cut your hair very short. It makes it easier to deal with when it starts to fall out.

People lose hair only in the area where they get radiation. It starts to fall out 2 to 3 weeks after your first radiation therapy session.

If you are getting radiation to the head, you may lose the hair on your head.

Managing Radiation Therapy Side Effects: What To Do About Hair Loss (Alopecia)



Greg: “I shaved my head and got a new cap.”

- Use a good electric razor. Plastic razors can cut your head.
- Go to the barber shop or hair salon if you don't have an electric razor.



Jackie: “I got a nice scarf.”

- If you want to match your current hair color, look for a wig before you lose your hair. Or try a new color or style. On days you just don't want to wear a wig, try a scarf or hat.
- The good news? Your nurse or social worker may be able to help you find a wig for free. Be sure to ask!

What should I do after my hair falls out?

Protect your scalp. Wear a hat or scarf when you are in cold places. Cover your head to protect it from the sun. Ask your doctor or nurse what lotions to use.

Will my hair grow back?

Your hair may grow back 3 to 6 months after treatment is over. In some cases, if you received a very high dose of radiation, your hair may not grow back. Talk with your doctor or nurse to learn what you can expect.

Other resources:

American Cancer Society

Toll-free: 1-800-227-2345
(1-800-ACS-2345)
Online: www.cancer.org

Look Good...Feel Better

Toll-free: 1-800-395-5665
(1-800-395-LOOK)
Online: www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org



Free Services To Learn More

National Cancer Institute Cancer Information Service

Phone: 1-800-422-6237
(1-800-4-CANCER)
TTY: 1-800-332-8615
Online: www.cancer.gov
Chat Online: www.cancer.gov/help



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