

HEREDITY THINNING (FEMALE PATTERN ALOPECIA)

Female pattern alopecia is a type of hair thinning which occurs in women. It is important to realize that this problem does not produce baldness. There is another problem in men called male pattern alopecia, which may produce baldness, but these conditions are completely different.

Female pattern alopecia produces a gradual thinning of hair on the top of the scalp. There are no bald patches on the crown or no widow's peak. The frontal hairline is maintained. It is just that the hair on the crown and top of the scalp tends to thin out very gradually.

It is normal for people to lose up to 100 hairs per day. Hair grows in a cycle where an individual hair root produces a growing hair, then a resting hair and then a hair, which falls out. When the hair falls out a new hair is there to replace it. In female pattern alopecia the hair which replaces the hair that just fell out is slightly smaller. With time there is an appearance of slight thinning. The problem often begins in the 20's or 30's.

It is very important to remember that female pattern alopecia does not produce baldness. It is simply a gradually thinning which progresses very slowly over the years. As an example if you would go into a nursing home, many of the women there do have thin hair on the top, but none are bald.

Unfortunately there is no reliable treatment for female pattern alopecia. There is a possibility that Rogaine (Minoxidil) therapy may help. I will discuss this further with you if you wish.

Female pattern alopecia is not a sign of any internal illness or any serious illness. It is simply a problem localized to the hair on the scalp. If you have any other questions about this condition, please ask me before you leave this office.