

Anagen Effluvium Cancer Treatment Hair Loss

Anagen Effluvium is the sudden hair loss which occurs as a result of chemicals or radiation, such as the hair loss that results during certain types of Chemotherapy or Radiation Treatment.

In Anagen effluvium the hair does not enter a resting stage as is does with Telogen effluvium. The hair loss is usually sudden occurring 1 to 3 weeks after exposure to the chemicals or radiation has occurred. Cancer Treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation treatments are the most common causes of anagen effluvium. However exposure to toxic chemicals such as Thallium and Arsenic may also produce a sudden loss of hair.

Chemotherapy is used in the treatment of cancer to destroy the cancer cells which divide rapidly within the body. One side effect of this cancer treatment however is that it can also stop the growth of the hair and may cause the shedding of hair. In some cases up to 90% of the hair may be affected and often the remaining 10% was already in the resting phase before the treatment was started. Some hair follicles do not shed the hair but produce a narrower weaker hair which breaks off easily.

Anagen effluvium caused by chemotherapy is only a temporary condition and in most cases hair growth will return to normal once treatment is finished. Many people even claim that their hair grows back healthier and thicker than before. Sometimes when the hair grows back the texture can be different. Some people who have had curly hair have claimed that their hair has grown back straight, and sometimes even the colour can become different.

There is a wide range of drugs used in Chemotherapy and not all of these drugs cause hairloss. The drugs which are most likely to cause hair loss are listed as follows:

- Amsacrine
- Cisplatin
- Cytosine Arabinoside
- Cyclophosphamide (Cytosan)
- Doxorubicin (Adriamycin)
- Epirubicin
- Etoposide (Taxol)
- Ifosfamide
- Vincristine (Oncovin)

The following drugs are less likely to cause hair loss:

- Actinomycin
- Bleomycins
- Daunorubicin
- Methotrexate
- Carboplatin
- Mitomycin C

Vinblastine

When hair loss occurs as a side effect of Chemotherapy it normally occurs very suddenly. Often the hair falls out in large clumps and in many cases it occurs overnight. Patients receiving Chemotherapy may wake to find large clumps of hair on their pillows. Many Doctors and Nurses recommend that the patient cut the hair very short before the hair loss is expected. Some patients may even choose to shave their heads in order to avoid shedding clumps of hair. It seems that many people seem to prefer the look of a totally bald head rather than a patchy looking scalp.

If a patient is able to plan for the hair loss due to chemotherapy or radiation therapy, then the patient may choose to find a wig before the treatment starts. If a wig is obtained before the treatment starts then it can be worn from the time before the hair loss occurs through to the stage where the hair grows back. There is a wide range of wigs available ranging from human hair to synthetic hair and wigs with a vacuum-fitted base to ready to wear wigs.

Scarves and Hats are also a good option for those who wish to disguise the hair loss.

There are a large number of choices that can be made when dealing with sudden hair loss caused by chemotherapy or radiation treatment. Everyone is different and will deal with this hair loss according to their needs.

The important thing to remember is that this hair loss is not permanent and once treatment is stopped the hair follicles will recover and the hair will grow back.