

# Telogen Effluvium

Telogen effluvium occurs when sudden or severe stress causes an increase in the shedding of the hair. In Telogen effluvium a sudden or stressful event can cause the hair follicles to prematurely stop growing and enter into a resting phase. The hair will then stay in the resting phase for about 3 months after which time a large amount of hair will be shed. Often the person involved will have recovered from the event before the hair loss occurs. In most cases the hair loss is temporary and the hair soon recovers. However in some cases the hair loss continues until the underlying cause is fixed. Telogen effluvium appears to affect more women than men because more of the precipitating event such as childbirth are experienced by women.

Temporary hair loss can be caused by:

- Child birth**
- Pregnancy Termination's**
- Starting or Stopping Birth control pills**
- Dieting Drug Therapy**
- Severe Emotional Stress**

## **Hair loss after Child Birth**

It is quite common for some women to experience some hair loss approximately 3 months after childbirth. This hair loss is triggered by the sudden changes in hormone levels.

Some statistics suggest a 20% of mothers lose hair during childbirth and others suggest a figure closer to 45%. Fortunately in most cases the hair will return to normal 9-12 months after the child's birth.

Many women notice that their hair is thicker and healthier during pregnancy, this is due to the increased levels of hormones oestrogen and progesterone which cause more hairs than normal to remain in the growth phase. When the child is born however many of the hair follicles that had delayed entering the resting phase suddenly enter the resting phase due to the rapid drop in hormone levels. As a result of this these hairs are then shed about 3 months after the birth.

## **Hair loss resulting from Pregnancy Termination's**

Similar to the way in which sudden hair loss can occur after childbirth sudden hair loss can also occur after an abortion or miscarriage which the hair loss is triggered by sudden changes in hormone levels. Hair that has remained in the growth phase due to increased hormone levels will suddenly enter the resting phase and will be shed approximately 3 months after the event.

## **Hair loss resulting from taking the Birth Control Pill**

Birth control pills affect the hormone levels within the body and these hormone levels can affect hair growth. In some cases hair thinning may occur due to the male hormones present in some types of contraceptive pills, this type of hair loss is similar to pattern baldness or androgenetic alopecia. However discontinuation of The Pill can

result in hair loss similar to that which occurs after child birth due to the drop in hormone levels.

### **Surgery**

The shock involved in a major operation can result in sudden hair loss. Also after micrograft and minigraft surgery where follicles are transplanted on the scalp telogen effluvium almost always occurs. Due to the shock of surgery the hair follicles will fall out within about 3 months after which time new hairs will grow from the transplanted follicles.

### **Prescribed Drugs that can cause hair loss**

Some drugs have been reported as causing hair loss in some individuals. While not everyone will experience hair loss some drugs are more likely to cause hair loss than others.

The following is list of some drugs that have been reported to have a side effect of hair loss:

Allopurinol ( for the treatment of Gout)  
Heparin ( blood thinner)  
Coumarin (blood thinner)  
Clofibrate (Cholesterol lowering drug)  
Gemfibrozil (Cholesterol lowering drug)

The above drugs are only a few of the drugs that have been reported as contributing towards hair loss. If you suspect that prescription drugs that you are taking are causing hair loss you should discuss this with your doctor.

### **Hair loss caused by severe emotional stress**

Some people experience telogen effluvium or sudden diffuse hair loss after a traumatic event such as the death of a family member or someone close, an accident, abuse or any other severely traumatic event. These events may trigger hair follicles to enter the resting phase prematurely in which case an increase in the amount of hair shed will be noticed about 3 months after the event, as the hair makes a transition from the

The above types to sudden hair loss are usually temporary and in most cases hair will grow back normally soon after it has fallen out. However in some cases where diffuse and sudden hair loss occurs the hair loss may continue until the underlying cause is treated.

**Types of sudden diffuse hair loss that continues until the cause is treated** are as follows:

Thyroid Gland Malfunction  
Diabetes  
Anaemia  
Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Hair loss that is caused by the above underlying causes will usually continue until the underlying cause is treated.

### **Thyroid Gland Malfunction**

Generally the first test a doctor or specialist is likely to carry out on a patient who is experiencing hair loss is a thyroid function test, as a thyroid problem may result in hair loss, Two types of thyroid problems can occur and either of these problems can result in hair loss. These conditions are Hypothyroidism and Hyperthyroidism

### **Hypothyroidism --- Underproduction of Thyroxin**

Hypothyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland produces too little thyroid hormone (thyroxin) to meet the bodies needs.

### **Hyperthyroidism --- Overproduction of Thyroxin**

Hyperthyroidism – Overproduction of Thyroxin Hyperthyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland produces too much thyroxin hormone (thyroxin) to meet the bodies needs. People with other auto-immune disease are especially vulnerable to hyperthyroidism. Hair loss may occur from either hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism. In some cases hair loss is minimal, however some individuals experience severe hair loss. Fortunately hair loss is usually reversible with proper treatment. If you suspect that you have a problem with your thyroid function then you should visit your doctor.

### **Diabetes**

Diabetes occurs when the body is unable to metabolize carbohydrates correctly. Untreated diabetes can result in hair loss.

### **Systemic Lupus Erythematosus**

This condition is an auto-immune disease which causes inflammation of multiple organ systems. The main signs of the disease are fever skin eruptions on the face and neck area, hands and arms. About half of the people with lupus will have hair loss. Systemic lupus erythematosus mainly affects women between the ages of 20 and 50. It is thought that genetic makeup plays a major role in the development of the disease.