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12 reasons you're losing hair faster than ever

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If your hair is falling out more than usual, here's the culprit and how to prevent it

Some of us were born with gorgeous, thick hair, and some of us have fine or thin hair, but one thing's true for us all: Every one of us loses hair, every single day. (Yes, even Kate Middleton!)

"On average, we lose 50-100 hairs day," says dermatologist Rebecca Kazin, M.D., FAAD. "This is all normal and part of the natural growth cycle." However, she adds, "When hair loss becomes more noticeable, it may be time to seek professional help to determine the underlying causes."

There are a lot of reasons you might be losing your hair more than usual, from the totally benign to the worrisome. Here are some of the most common causes and some of the more concerning ones...

It could be as simple as a styling habit...

1. Using a plastic or artificial brush

"Plastic or artificial brushes can be aggressive with your hair and scalp," says Dr. Kazin. "A natural brush will help limit damage."

2. Skipping conditioner

"Conditioners help restore the natural oils that are removed from the hair and scalp during the washing process," explains Dr. Kazin. "A nourishing conditioner will help soften and strengthen your hair." She says to use protein-based formulas and to stay away from sulfates.

3. Excessive styling and tight ponytails

"Our daily routines and hair treatment regimens can cause hair loss," says Robert Dorin, D.O., medical director of [True & Dorin Medical Group](#) in New York. "Although not all of this is true hair loss but rather breakage of hair strands resulting in less volume, pulling and traction on the hair itself can actually cause the follicles to be killed if done on a continual basis." *Yikes!*

4. Brushing your hair when it's wet

Hair is at its most fragile (and prone to breakage) when it is wet because the protective cuticle is slightly raised, explains Dr. Dorin. "Brushing your hair in the shower followed by aggressive towel-drying is a recipe for breakage." Instead, he recommends, try this technique: Brush your hair before getting in the shower. Then, don't vigorously towel-dry your hair by rubbing it back and forth, as this lifts up the cuticle layer of the hair, making the hair rough and dull. Instead, use a superabsorbent microfiber towel, and gently blot your hair to absorb as much water as possible.

5. Taking super-steamy showers

Hot showers feel great, but hot water dehydrates the hair shaft, leading to dry, brittle hair that is more prone to breakage, says Dr. Dorin. Hot water also strips hair of its natural oils and "throws your scalp's pores into overdrive in order to keep up with the oil production, which damages the root and leads to additional shedding."

So, he says, always wash your hair in warm (not hot) water, and do a cool water rinse. "The cool water will cause the keratin-filled cells of the cuticle to clamp down and lay flat, rendering you hair more shiny and ensuring its natural integrity to protect the cortex of the hair shaft," he explains. Got that?

6. Blow-drying with hot air all the time

"Heat is extremely damaging to hair," says Dr. Kazin, so switch your hair dryer to a cooler setting. "It might take longer to dry and style your hair, but it will prevent harm," she says.

7. Letting your head soak up too much sun

The keratin proteins in your hair break down when exposed to UV rays, says Dr. Dorin. "Sun can damage your entire hair, from the cuticle to the end, even causing dreaded split ends." So wear a hat, ladies! And when you apply sunscreen to your face, Dr. Dorin recommends also using a [hair mist or spray that contains UV protection](#).

8. Using "long-lasting" styling products

"Products that claim 'all-day mega-hold' are making hair harder to hold on to," says Dr. Dorin. Why? They are usually high in alcohol content — the culprit in dry, brittle hair. Once you brush those products out, he explains, the residue causes hair to break and fall out. "Try opting out of products that cause hair to harden and stiffen," he says. "Instead, try using softer-hold products, like styling creams that maintain the moisture of the hair cuticle without creating that friction when being brushed."

Of course, it could also be something more serious...

9. Taking too many supplements

"Unnecessary vitamins can build up in the body if they are not water-soluble and could cause detrimental side effects," says Dr. Dorin. "Certain vitamins, such as vitamin A, can trigger hair loss and breakage when taken in excess." He recommends making an appointment with your doctor to discuss your intake of vitamins and nutrients. "If you are advised to stop taking supplements, you're in for good news," he says. "The hair loss caused by excess vitamins is reversible, and your hair should quickly turn back to normal."

10. You may have a scalp condition

Scalp conditions such as seborrhea dermatitis, psoriasis and scalp fungal infection (tinea capitis) can suppress hair growth and cause localized hair loss to the region of the scalp affected, explains Dr. Dorin.

Definitely see a specialist if you suspect you have one of these issues, because they're treatable! "In general, antidandruff shampoos, shampoos containing salicylic acid, UV light, steroid ointments and antifungal shampoos will treat these conditions," he says.

11. Crash dieting

A sudden change in diet or [starving yourself can lead the body to direct its energy](#) toward the more

essential functions (such as helping the heart and brain function), leading it away from making hair, explains Dr. Dorin. Of course, hair loss is only one of the many dangers of this kind of behavior.

Conversely, for a great hair-healthy diet, consider adding leafy vegetables and eggs to your meal repertoire, says Dr. Kazin. Also, she adds, "It's been shown that diets rich in calcium and iron can help reduce or prevent hair loss. Be sure to also include proteins in your diet, because hair is rich in protein."

12. A medical issue

There are medical issues of which hair loss is a symptom, says Dr. Dorin. A few of the common ones: hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, iron deficiency anemia, polycystic ovarian syndrome, discoid lupus and sarcoidosis. The good news: "Most of these, if diagnosed and treated, can stabilize hair loss and see some form of recovery of hair," he says.

Not sure whether your hair loss warrants a visit to a professional? It's always better to be safe than sorry. Dr. Dorin offers these signs that it's definitely time to seek help:

- ◉ Your hair loss is sudden rather than gradual.
- ◉ You notice hair shedding in large amounts after combing or brushing, or if your hair becomes thinner or falls out.
- ◉ You are concerned a medicine may be causing your hair loss.
- ◉ Your skin is scaly or has a rash, or you have any change on your skin or scalp with hair loss.

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