General Hospital

What is alopecia?

Alopecia (a-lo-PEE-shee-ah) is another word for hair loss or thinning of the hair. It is a common, yet temporary, side effect of some cancer medicines. Alopecia can occur anywhere on the body and may happen after a few treatments. Currently, there are no medicines that can prevent hair loss during treatment.

How can I prepare for the changes that may occur?

- Before treatment starts, have your hair cut short. It will help you prepare mentally for the change in your appearance.
 - If your hair is long enough, consider having a wig made from your own hair.
 - Shop for a wig, toupee, or turban soon after your diagnosis.
- Talk to family and friends about how you feel, or join a support group with people who are going through or have gone through the same experience.

What are some steps I can take to care for my scalp?

- Keep your scalp clean with a moisturizing shampoo and conditioner.
- Use gentle lotions or creams on your scalp when needed; and use a sunscreen, hat, scarf, or wig to protect your scalp.

Will my hair grow back?

- If you do lose your hair, it will usually grow back after the treatments are over.
- It may grow back while you are still having treatments.
- Your hair may grow back a different color or texture.

When my hair grows back, how should I take care of it?

- If you usually wash your hair daily, limit the number of times to twice a week.
- If you usually blow-dry your hair at a high temperature, use a lower heat setting.
- Gently style your hair with soft brushes and wide-tooth combs.

The information contained herein is not comprehensive and is intended only as a guide.

Other suggestions from your healthcare providers:	×