

NEW HAIR LOSS TREATMENTS SHOW POSITIVE RESULTS

Dermatologists provide both surgical and medical hair treatments.

Dr Yu-chuan Lee, dermatologist, Fellow of Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD) says: “Hair loss can be devastating to a person’s self image, but is often overlooked as it isn’t life threatening. In the last two years, there has been significant advances in management of hair loss in both males and females with current trials showing impressive results. Perhaps in the future, balding will be optional.”

Dr Pooja Sharma, dermatologist, Fellow of the ACD says: “Newer biological medications are proving to be successful in otherwise recalcitrant hair conditions like lichen planopilaris and alopecia areata. We are providing hair transplant, Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) and low level LED laser for androgenetic alopecia.”

“Treatment of hair disorders is at an exciting phase. Biologics are now being used in a number of scarring and non-scarring alopecias that have not responded or only partially responded to conventional treatments resulting in significant morbidity. Phase II and phase III clinical trials are currently enrolling patients with chronic severe alopecia areata. Report of off-label use of tofacitinib in alopecia areata that is recalcitrant to therapy are reporting success rates of up to 80%.”

“Tofacitinib has also been found to be useful in recalcitrant folliculitis decalvans, sarcoidosis and vitiligo. A number of biologics such as the IRAK-4 kinase inhibitor medications are in phase 1 trials for lupus and pilot investigations with the IL-23 inhibitor Tildrakizumab are in progress in lichen planus, lichen planopilaris and folliculitis decalvans.”

The most common hair loss disorders are:

1. Hormonal hair loss, which is essentially balding and can affect men and women. It is reported to affect up to 50% of all men and women over 40 years old; and up to 75% of women over 65 years old
2. Alopecia areata, which can be the most devastating as it tends to affect children and younger adults with bald patches of various sizes suddenly appearing. It can progress to total hair loss
3. Scarring or irreversible hair loss, which is much less common, but there is a greater urgency to treat and avoid further damage to the hair follicles.

A good balanced diet with adequate protein is essential for healthy thick hair. Avoid dramatic changes in weight or chronic stress, which can cause or worsen hair thinning. Young women who are vegan or vegetarians have to be aware iron deficiency is probably the most important cause of hair loss. The good news is that once the diet or stress is removed, the hair loss will correct itself.

Dr Lee says: “If you notice your hair is thinning, first, check your diet and reduce any unnecessary stress. Discuss the problem with your General Practitioner (GP) and if the hair loss is persistent, you may need to see a dermatologist. It is much easier to thicken hair when the loss is minimal, but I



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have seen dramatic results even in those who have lost more than 50% of their hair and the improvement in their self confidence is incredibly rewarding.”

ENDS

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The ACD is the peak medical college accredited by the Australian Medical Council for the training and professional development of medical practitioners in the specialty of dermatology. They provide authoritative information about dermatology to Government, the media, other health professionals and the general public.

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