

Patient Information for Telogen effluvium

Overview

Telogen effluvium is a type of alopecia, or hair loss. This condition causes the hair on the scalp to shed more than normal. This excessive shedding can be triggered by:

- Serious illness
- High fever
- Medication or drug use
- Fad diet (usually low protein)
- Pregnancy / childbirth
- Heavy blood loss
- Significant emotional or physical stress
- Thyroid disease

The loss of hair usually begins a few months after the event that causes it. Telogen effluvium does not result in baldness. The hair will eventually regrow, usually within 6 months.

Who's At Risk

Because of the hormonal changes of pregnancy, women are slightly more likely to go through an episode of telogen effluvium.

Infants may experience telogen effluvium in their first months of life.

Signs & Symptoms

Hair falls out at an increased rate. You may have bald spots or experience an overall thinning of your hair.

Self-Care Guidelines

Because telogen effluvium will resolve itself, there is no treatment. Some people may choose to use minoxidil (Rogaine), but it has not been clinically proven to work.

When to Seek Medical Care

See your doctor if you are suddenly losing a lot of hair on your head, either in patches or all over, especially if you suspect it may be caused by medication, illness, diet, or stress.

Treatments Your Physician May Prescribe

Telogen effluvium will resolve itself. There is no treatment.

Your doctor can help you find out what is causing the hair loss. If your medication is responsible, you and your doctor can discuss alternatives. If your diet is responsible, your doctor may recommend iron supplements and changes to your diet.