

# "Help! I'm losing my hair!"

If your part is expanding or the thickness of your ponytail is shrinking, you're not alone: Some 65% of us will have experienced some significant degree of hair loss by the time we reach 60! Is there any way to stop—or reverse it? Yes, say our medical experts!

## 1 Halt hair loss at home!

Get the gold standard!

It's still minoxidil, better known by the brand name Rogaine. "Think of minoxidil as an anti-aging cream for your scalp," says dermatologist Melissa Piliang, M.D. "Just as you apply anti-wrinkle cream to your skin at night, every night consistently apply 5% minoxidil foam, which is gentler than the liquid formulations that can cause itching." The key word: consistently! "My patients often say, 'I tried it for a month and nothing happened, so I stopped,'" says hair loss specialist Marc Avram, M.D. "Most people see results after six to nine months of using minoxidil, so don't give up." One option: Women's Rogaine Unscented Foam, \$21.55, Walmart.com.



follicles, exacerbating hair loss," she says. It also removes DHT, a hormone that blocks hair regrowth. Choose a shampoo that contains zinc pyrithione and/or ketoconazole, such as Nizoral A-D Anti Dandruff Shampoo, \$8, Amazon.com.

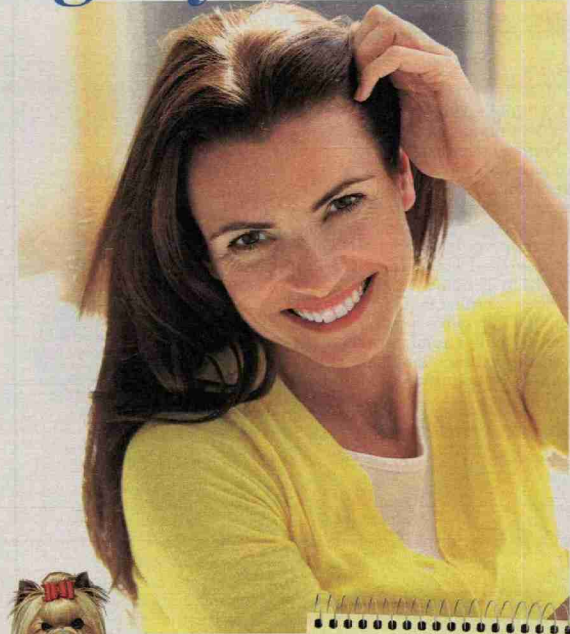
## 2 Nourish your hair and scalp!

Get your iron checked!

Keeping your scalp and hair follicles well nourished is essential for thick, gorgeous hair. One of the most important nutrients is iron. "Low iron levels inhibit hair growth—and I've also found that women low in iron don't respond as well to hair-loss treatments," observes dermatologist George Cotsarelis, M.D. Ask your doctor for a blood test to check your iron levels. The test is important since taking too much iron can cause other problems.

Get a one-two growth punch!

Two more essential hair-growth nutrients? Vitamin D and zinc, says Dr. Piliang. Vitamin D helps reset the hair cycle from shedding to the growth phase. "And zinc keeps hair follicles healthy." A daily multivitamin should satisfy your zinc needs, and, with your M.D.'s okay, take 600 IU of



vitamin D daily. One option: Solgar Vitamin D-3 600 IU, \$11.39 at Vitamin Shoppe.com.

Cue the protein!

"If hair were an animal, it would be a lion, not a lamb," says Michael Lorin Reed, M.D. In other words, your hair craves red meat! "Protein is essential for healthy hair, and red meat, in particular, contains elements that encourage growth such as iron, manganese and magnesium." Vegetarian? Protein-rich picks include egg whites, Greek yogurt, almonds and whey protein powder.

## Consider "hair acupuncture"!

Ask your doctor about microneedling, a procedure in which very fine needles are moved across the scalp to kick-start the body's natural healing response, which in turn spurs hair growth, says Dr. Piliang. Bonus: The needles create "micro portals" that enhance the absorption of minoxidil. The cost per session starts at about \$100 and is not covered by insurance; certain credit cards, such as Care Credit.com, offer financing for cosmetic procedures.

—Kristina Mastrocola

## Shampoo more, not less!

One mistake Dr. Piliang says her patients often make? "A lot of them cut back on how often they shampoo because they think it'll make shedding worse. No so! "It's so important to shampoo regularly to ward off dandruff, which can clog



## Our expert panel



**Dermatologist Melissa Piliang, M.D.**, is a hair-loss specialist at the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.



**Hair transplant specialist Marc Avram, M.D.**, is a clinical professor of dermatology at the New York Presbyterian Hospital-Weill Medical College at Cornell Medical Center.



**George Cotsarelis, M.D.**, chair of the dermatology department at the University of Pennsylvania, has been named one of the best doctors in America in several publications.



**Michael Lorin Reed, M.D.**, a specialist in hair and scalp disorders, is the author of *Women's Hair Loss* and the former director of the New York University hair-loss clinic.

**IMPORTANT:** See a doctor to rule out any underlying condition that may be causing your hair loss, such as an under- or overactive thyroid, anemia or a hormone imbalance, and before taking any new supplements.