

Bald Spots

When one or more spots on the scalp lose hair, bald spots result. Many things can cause bald spots. In most cases, bald spots are not permanent and may get better with proper treatment and care.

Hair Care

Repeatedly pulling, tugging, or twisting the hair into tight braids or pony tails can cause bald spots. These kinds of bald spots generally show no scalp irritation and are temporary. If you notice bald spots without scalp irritation and think it may be linked to your hair style, consider changing the style so your hair isn't constantly being pulled in the same direction.

Alopecia Areata

One of the most common causes of localized hair loss is a condition called Alopecia Areata. In this condition, well-defined circular areas of hair loss appear. They are usually about the size of a quarter, though sometimes larger. Alopecia Areata is believed to occur when your immune system attacks hair follicles, which is where hair growth begins. Doctors are not sure why this happens.

Some treatments, such as corticosteroid injections, contact immunotherapy, or medications can help the hair grow back. In most cases the hair will usually grow back within a year, even if left untreated. Talk to your health care professional about the different options.

Medications

Another common reason for localized hair loss is caused by taking certain medications. Chemotherapy treatment for cancer is probably the most dramatic and well-known medication that causes this type of hair loss. But other types of medications can also affect your hair, although the effect is much less drastic than with chemotherapy. If you notice that you are losing any hair after you just started taking a new medication, call your health care professional immediately.

Ringworm

When scaling and irritation of the skin happen along with hair loss, it may be caused by ringworm of the scalp. Ringworm is a fungal infection. If you have scalp ringworm, your doctor will give you a prescription medication. Getting treated right away will reduce the risk of permanent hair loss. If your scalp is irritated and you're losing hair, call your health care professional immediately.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your health care professional if you experience sudden hair loss, if it develops after beginning a new medication, or if you experience scalp irritation with hair loss.



Other resources

- Connect to our Web site at **kp.org** to access health and drug encyclopedias, interactive programs, health classes, and much more.
- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*.
- Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for health information, programs, and other resources.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.