

# 4 Major Reasons Why Your Hair Is Suddenly Way Thinner

Before you panic, read this.

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As women, our relationship to our hair can be very personal. It can be a form of identity and pride, whether you're rocking thick waves or pin-straight bangs. That's why noticing that strands are suddenly getting sparser can cause a freak-out for even the calmest of women. Thankfully, doctors say there are several super-common reasons why it might be happening. We break down the top reasons, plus ask the experts for ways to make it better.

## 1 YOU'VE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

Trauma can be physical—like undergoing surgery or getting in a car accident—or it can be emotional, like losing someone you love or having a high-stress relationship on the rocks. Either way, it can take a toll on your tresses. "You can have a 'shock' hair loss, also known as telogen effluvium, which is self-limited and will resolve on its own, but can last up to six months," explains Deanne Mraz Robinson, M.D., assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Yale New Haven Hospital.

**What To Do:** Take care of you. Eat a vitamin B-rich diet packed with whole grains, protein, and dark, leafy greens, which all help combat hair loss, says New York City dermatologist, Marina Peredo, M.D. The good news is that your hair will come back as you feel healthier. If you'd like to help it along, Robinson suggests a clinically-backed supplement like Viviscal or Nutrafol that is filled with vitamins and minerals like biotin, niacin, and keratin that encourage and support hair growth. You'll just need daily consistency with taking your pills and a good dose of patience, too: It can take a couple of months before you start seeing a difference.





## 2 YOU'RE GOING TOO EXTRA WITH YOUR HAIR

Do you bleach your hair? Are hot tools always on your bathroom counter? Are you trying keratin-this and color-me that? It can all simply be too much for your hair, warns Peredo. Plus, if you stress-twirl of strands around your finger, even this can cause tension that leads to thinning. "And tight braids and pulled-back ponytails that are worn on a continuous basis can all create wear and tear on the scalp and strands, leading to brittleness and breakage that can look like sudden thinning," adds Peredo.

**What To Do:** Lay on the brakes, girl. The less you do, the better for your hair. Go for a more natural color and texture while your hair recovers, and choose gentle sulfate-free shampoos and conditioners, advises Peredo. If you're always braiding or pulling your hair back tightly, let it free so it can build back strength. You can also try daily hair supplements containing biotin, vitamins, and minerals, as described in the trauma section, to help encourage growth and strength as you rehab your hair.



### 3 IT'S HORMONAL OR MEDICAL

"Sudden thinning hair can be a symptom of anemia (low red blood cell count), hormonal issues especially related to events like pregnancy, or a thyroid disorder, which are all very common in women," says Peredo. If any of these are the case, hair loss won't be the only symptom present. With thyroid disease, you'll likely also notice changes in energy level, weight, and skin dryness, and you may experience heart palpitations. Hormonal fluctuations often cause acne, facial hair loss like in your eyebrows, and changes in your period.

**What To Do:** If you suspect there's something hormonal or medical at play, see your doctor for a complete physical with blood work. Your doc should be able to offer more insight into exactly what is causing the hair thinning, along with the best recommendations for treating it.

Yael Halaas, M.D., addresses thinning hair in patients with a couple of today's latest options. Platelet Rich Fibrin Matrix (PRFMP)—which is known as a PRP treatment—involves spinning samples of your own blood to release growth factors, purifying it, and injecting it into the scalp to help stimulate hair growth. "This means you're keeping your hair and decreasing thinning," Halaas explains. She also uses Smart Graft, the new minimally invasive micro-grafting technology that harvests hairs (typically from the back of head or other parts of the body) to replenish thinning areas. "Patients can expect to see results in about three months, noticeable improvement in six months, and a full head of hair growth by 12 to 14 months," says Halaas.



## 4 IT'S HEREDITARY

If mom or dad have always had thinning hair, and you notice it young—as early as your late teens—it could be androgenetic alopecia, says Washington, DC plastic surgeon Michael Somenek, M.D.. "The first sign of this kind of hair loss in women is a widening of the part or the ponytail becoming smaller," says Somenek.

**What To Do:** Combination treatments maximize the potential for new hair growth and prevent continued loss of hair follicles, says Somenek. He likes to combine hair supplements and topical treatments like Women's Rogaine, which contains minoxidil, to help grow back patient hair. The good news: There are far more options to feel hopeful about now than there were for mom and dad, so thinning can be far better managed.