Does Fibromyalgia Cause Hair Loss?

by ADRIEL MALDONADO

Fibromyalgia Hair Loss

While it is normal for everyone to lose a certain amount of hair each day, some with fibromyalgia may experience fibromyalgia hair loss.

Everyone has a cycle of hair loss and regrowth. The anagen phase lasts for somewhere between two to six years, during this time the hair grows. Then during the telogen phase, lasting for about three months, the hair rests. At the end of the telogen phase, the hair falls out and is replaced by new hair.

There are a number of reasons the hair cycle may be thrown off tract, this is called telogen effluvium. It seems that fibromyalgia may be one of those reasons. But things aren't always what they seem. Does fibromyalgia directly cause hair loss and thinning? Or, could something else be the culprit of fibromyalgia hair loss?

How Common is Hair Loss With Fibromyalgia?

As with many other symptoms, the best we can do is rely on the testimony of others with fibromyalgia. I posted a poll on a fibromyalgia social media page, asking who had experienced hair loss with fibromyalgia. Out of 112 people polled, 85 of them said they had experienced hair loss. I also received a few comments that there could be other factors that at the root of the problem.

The issue remains that it is not understood why people with fibromyalgia lose their hair. Little research has been done on this area of fibro, considering it is one of the less bothersome symptoms.

Even if pain and fatigue are more consuming, hair loss is still a distressing problem that many of us want to be addressed. Self-esteem can certainly take a hit when dealing with the many symptoms of fibromyalgia. Thinning hair may just be yet another unneeded blow.

It appears that people with fibromyalgia primarily experience hair loss from their head. I personally have dealt with losing hair from both my head and eyebrows. So, it could vary from person to person.

Causes of Fibromyalgia Hair Loss

Some of the potential causes of fibromyalgia hair loss may include:

- Side effects of medication.
- Stress.
- Thyroid dysfunction.
- Iron deficiency.

One likely reason that many with fibromyalgia experience hair loss are due to side effects to certain medications,

such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or antidepressants, among others. If your hair loss is caused by medication you may want to talk to your doctor to check if you can make adjustments.

Fibro fighters are also prone to a heightened response to stress. It is not surprising then, that many people report their hair loss mainly occurs during periods of high stress. Fibromyalgia flare-ups also seem to trigger increased hair loss for some.

As fibromyalgia frequently comes along with any number of other chronic illnesses, it is also possible that fibro is not to blame at all. Thyroid disorders, especially an underactive thyroid, can lead to hair loss. You may benefit from discussing all of your symptoms, including hair loss, with your doctor and having your thyroid tested.

It is also not uncommon for those of us with fibromyalgia to have certain vitamin and mineral deficiencies. An iron deficiency can cause hair loss. If you have symptoms of iron deficiency talk to your doctor about getting your iron levels tested. An iron supplement may be the help that you need to reduce unnecessary hair loss.

The question that we must answer now is, can anything be done about our hair loss?

How to Treat Hair Loss From Fibromyalgia

There is some good news, in most cases, hair loss among those with fibro is only temporary.

As mentioned in the outset, telogen effluvium is when there is a disruption in the hair growth cycle. This disruption means that the cycle is delayed, but your hair will grow back again.

There may be some things though, that can help slow down the hair loss or promote healthy regrowth.

Some have found biotin, or B7, to help increase hair growth and improve overall health of their hair. Biotin is found in a number of food sources, such as nuts, whole grains and bananas. Biotin can also be taken as a supplement, but as with anything, it is good to talk to your doctor before adding a new vitamin or supplement.

A change in hairstyle may also help to conceal hair loss, or possibly reduce the amount of hair you lose. I have found that my hair loss slows down drastically when I keep it short.

The Bottom Line...

Even if fibromyalgia hair loss is not life-threatening, it is a reason to be concerned. You certainly are not alone if it is something that you worry about.

Fibromyalgia may affect every aspect of our life, even our hair, but we should remember that we are strong, we have weathered through much worse storms, and we are in good company among a community of fibro fighters.