Hair loss (alopecia) related to cancer treatment

- Ask your doctor before using any perms or color treatments.
- Try a short haircut, it may help you adjust to hair loss.
- If you choose to shave your head, use an electric shaver so you won't cut yourself.
- Use gel or hair cream that has no alcohol. It may give your hair more fullness.
- Protect your scalp from the sun when outdoors. Wear a wide-brimmed hat or scarf or use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30.
- Wear a hat or scarf in cold weather to reduce the loss of body heat.
- If you find wigs to be itchy and hot, try wearing a comfortable scarf or turban.
- Do not use anything on your head if you are receiving radiation therapy to the head, unless your radiation oncology doctor or nurse has approved it.



Where can I get more information?

Urgent care unit (UCU) open 24hrs contact no 44397277/44397179

You can visit the Patient Information Center available from Sunday to Thursday

Contact no (44397530) from 7 am to 3 pm

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Hair loss (alopecia) related to cancer treatment

What is hair loss or alopecia?

- Hair loss (alopecia) occurs due to certain cancer treatments such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy.
- It is one of the most distressing side effects of chemotherapy treatments.
- Hair loss usually begins one to three weeks after your first treatment.
- Hair loss or hair thinning usually occurs on the head, face and body with chemotherapy treatment. With radiotherapy hair loss occurs only on the treated area.
- The amount of hair loss that you have depends on your treatment and dose of medication. Hair loss does not occur with all chemotherapy.

Will my hair grow back?

- Hair follicles are especially sensitive because those cells multiply rapidly just like the cancer cells. The difference is that the normal cells will repair themselves, so these side effects are temporary and hair will usually regrow after your treatment.
- Your hair may begin to grow back six to eight weeks after the last treatment.
- Sometimes your hair may grow back a little different to how was before your treatment – it may be curly if it was straight or thick if it was thin. Usually these changes are not permanent.

How can I manage hair loss after chemotherapy?

- Talk about your feelings to friends and family, especially children, before it occurs.
- You may want to choose head coverings like hats, scarves and wigs that are comfortable.
- If you plan to purchase a wig, it is a good idea to select one before hair loss occurs so that you can match your color and style easily.
- Be gentle with your hair. Choose a mild shampoo such as baby shampoo, and a soft hairbrush.
- Set your hair dryer on low heat or let your hair dry naturally
- Avoid treatments that are likely to cause damage to your hair, such as heated rollers, curling irons and frequent blow-drying.

