

Hair Loss

Some chemotherapy and radiation treatments can cause hair loss. Loss of scalp hair may make you feel cold due to the loss of body heat from your head. Hair loss depends on the kind of treatment that you are given. You are more likely to lose hair from your head than from other parts of your body. This is because scalp hair grows faster than other body hair. Ask your doctor or nurse if your treatment can cause hair loss.

Hair Loss Caused by Chemotherapy

Some types of chemotherapy cause hair loss. You might notice hair loss after your first treatment, or later after several treatments. Sometimes scalp hair will thin out slowly. Hair can also fall out in clumps when you shower, wash or brush your hair. Sometimes hair will be lost from other parts of your body. Hair can begin to grow again during chemotherapy, or 1 to 2 months after treatment is finished. New hair may have a slightly different color or texture.

Hair Loss Caused by Radiation Therapy

The dose of radiation and what part of your body is treated affects how much and how long you may be without hair. Hair loss may happen only in the area of your body being treated with radiation. The scalp and the area behind the ears may become sensitive. High doses of radiation may cause permanent hair loss. Your hair may grow back if you have lower doses of radiation, but the color or texture may change.

Hair Care Tips

- When you wash your hair, rinse it well and gently pat the hair dry with a towel. Keep your scalp clean.
- Use a wide tooth comb.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

- Choose “soft hold” hair sprays that can easily be brushed through once dry.
- You may want to limit the use of blow dryers, rollers (curlers) and curling irons or straighteners, as they can break your hair.
- Ask your hairstylist/barber or doctor about what hair care products you may use.
- It is important to wear sunscreen on your scalp if you go outside without a head covering.

Head Covering Options

There are many options for head coverings for hair loss. There are many styles available at different prices. It is best to shop for a wig before you lose your hair so it is easier to match your hair color and style. Hats, turbans and scarves also make good head coverings. These are often lower in cost. **Remember all head coverings should be kept clean.**

The James Cancer Hospital has a special store called **Hope’s Boutique**, located in The Stefanie Spielman Comprehensive Breast Center at 1145 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, OH 43212. It offers wigs, head coverings and hair accessories. For more information, please call (614) 293-9393. Your social worker can provide you with more information about head coverings and financial resources to cover the cost.

Support Programs and Services

The James Cancer Hospital offers the Look Good . . . Feel Better program. This program is designed for women with cancer who are having chemotherapy or radiation therapy. The Look Good . . . Feel Better program is sponsored by the American Cancer Society, the National Cosmetology Association, and the Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association. For more information, call 1-888-227-6446.