

# Your Hair & Scalp

Hair loss can be a common side effect of chemotherapy. Not all chemotherapy drugs will make you lose your hair, and some people experience only mild thinning that is noticeable only to them. Your doctor or nurse can tell you if your medication is likely to make you lose your hair.

If you do lose your hair:

- It will almost always grow back after the treatments are over. However, it might be a different color or texture.
- Hair loss can occur on all parts of the body, not just the head. Facial hair, arm and leg hair, underarm hair and pubic hair may be affected.
- Hair loss usually begins about two weeks following the first chemotherapy treatment. It will not happen all at once but over a few days or weeks.
- Once hair loss begins, the scalp can become dry, itchy or tender.

Some tips on caring for your hair and scalp during chemotherapy:

- Be gentle when caring for your hair and scalp, using mild shampoos and conditioners, a soft hairbrush and low heat when drying your hair.
- Don't dye your hair or get a permanent. The harsh chemicals can damage your hair and irritate your scalp.
- Have your hair cut short; a shorter style will make your hair look thicker and fuller. It will also make hair loss easier to manage if it does occur.
- Use a sunscreen, sun block, hat or scarf to protect your scalp from the sun.
- Use a satin pillowcase to reduce friction and irritation.
- If you decide to purchase a wig, do so before you lose a lot of hair so you can match your natural color, texture and style.