

## ALOPECIA AREATA

### **What causes alopecia areata?**

In alopecia areata a round patch of hair loss on the scalp appears suddenly. Since the patch is usually quite small, it may be present for months before it is discovered by a barber or hairdresser. The hair-growing tissue stops making hair, and then the hair falls out from the roots. Why this happens is a mystery. It is not related to any internal problem or illness. Alopecia areata is not contagious, not caused by foods, or not the result of any medication. At times stress can cause the problem. It sometimes runs in families.

Alopecia areata has three stages. First, there is sudden hair loss. Then the patches of hair loss may enlarge. Last, new hair grows back. This entire cycle may take many months or sometimes more than a year. People with alopecia areata do not go bald except in very rare circumstances.

### **Treatment**

In alopecia areata the hair grows back in nearly all cases, however, this may be slow. Sometimes the new hair is temporarily gray or white, but after a while the original color usually returns. The natural regrowth of hair can often be speeded up by injecting a cortisone medicine into the areas of hair loss. The cortisone is injected into the skin. It acts only in the area where it has been injected. Unfortunately, there is no way of preventing new areas of hair loss if they would happen to develop. However, if new areas of hair loss do appear, then the regrowth may be helped by injecting the cortisone medication.

It is important not to worry about this condition since it is usually a temporary problem and the small patch of hair will eventually return. Since it is only a skin problem, there is no need to worry about this condition relating to your general health. If you have any other questions about this condition, please do not hesitate to ask me.