

# Understanding Alopecia Areata

Knowing about the causes and symptoms of alopecia areata can help support your skin care.



## What is alopecia areata?

**Alopecia Areata (AA) is an autoimmune disease.**

Your immune system is a part of your body that works hard to protect you, but sometimes it can mistake part of your body as a threat and attack it. In this case, the body is attacking its own hair follicles (the structures that grow hair). This causes the hair to fall out and can prevent it from regrowing.



## How does alopecia areata develop?

Alopecia areata is a hair loss disorder that typically causes patches of hair loss that can range from coin-shaped patches to total hair loss. It is not fully understood why people develop alopecia areata, but if you have a family history of this condition, you may be more likely to develop it.

## Which parts of the body can be affected by alopecia areata?

**Alopecia areata can affect different areas of the body.**



**On the head:** Hair on the head can fall out in coin-shaped patches or in some cases, all over the scalp



**Facial hair:** Facial hair can be affected, including the eyebrows, eyelashes, and beard hair



**Body hair:** Sometimes, alopecia areata can cause total loss of hair all over the body

It's important to know that hair loss may or may not be persistent, and that there is potential for hair regrowth in people with alopecia areata.

## Is alopecia areata the same for everyone?

**Alopecia areata can look different for each person. The location, pattern, and amount of hair loss varies in alopecia areata.**



# How is alopecia areata treated?



Alopecia areata is unpredictable, and each person with it will have a different experience. There is no cure for alopecia areata, but there are treatments that may be helpful for some people.

It is important to discuss treatment with your doctor or a doctor who specializes in alopecia areata (a dermatologist).

## Navigating to a Dermatologist



Getting the right care starts with taking the right steps:

**Check Your Insurance:** Confirm with your doctor if you need a referral for a dermatologist visit.

**Meet with Your Doctor:** Discuss your concerns and ask for a referral if required.

**Book an Appointment with a Dermatologist:** Come prepared with your medical history, symptoms, and goals for treatment to ensure the best consultation.



## Why Seeing a Dermatologist Matters

- Early diagnosis can prevent long-term skin damage and discomfort.
- Many conditions worsen without medical treatment, even if symptoms come and go. Follow-up care is important to monitor your condition and adjust treatment as necessary.
- Dermatologists can provide personalized treatment plans.



## Questions to Empower your Visit

- “Could this be related to an autoimmune condition or family history?”
- “What are my treatment options, and what should I expect?”
- “Are there any lifestyle changes or triggers I should be aware of?”
- “Can you explain how this condition affects my body and long-term outcome?”



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