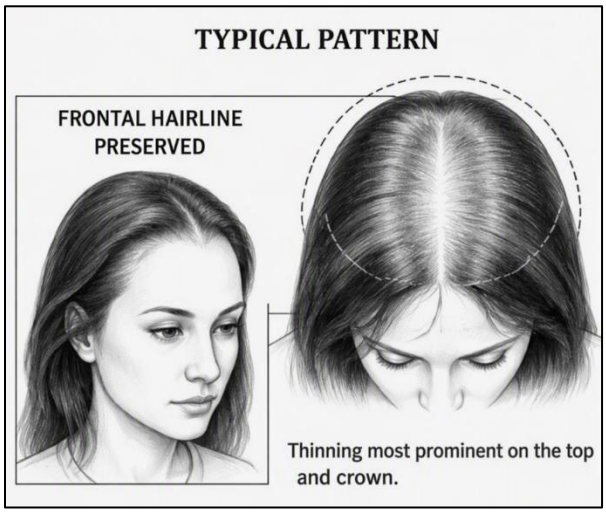
Female Pattern Hair Loss (FPHL)

Female pattern hair loss (FPHL) is the most common type of hair loss in women. It usually happens slowly over time and causes thinning on the top of the scalp. You may notice your part looks wider or your ponytail feels smaller.



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Causes

- FPHL often runs in families. You can inherit it from either parent.
- Hormone changes, especially around menopause, may play a role.
- It often starts in your 40s, 50s, or 60s, but it can begin earlier.
- It is not caused by hair products or styling.

Signs

- Thinning hair on the crown (top) of your head.
- A wider part line.
- Hair near your temples slowly pulling back.
- A smaller or thinner ponytail.
- You do not usually get bald spots or lose all your hair.

Treatment

Starting treatment early gives you the best chance to slow or reverse the thinning.

Options include:

- **Topical Minoxidil (Rogaine®)**
  A foam or liquid applied directly to the scalp once or twice daily. This is the most common treatment. You might notice extra shedding early on. That is normal and temporary. Keep using it to maintain results.
- **Oral Minoxidil**
  A prescription pill version of minoxidil, taken once daily. It may be an option if topical treatments are irritating or not working well. It can cause side effects like swelling or increased hair in other areas. Often used off-label.
- **Prescription Pills (Finasteride, Spironolactone)**
  These medicines help by blocking hormones that cause hair thinning. It **is not** safe if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant.
- **Light Therapy**
  Devices like laser combs or helmets may help stimulate hair growth. Use them regularly for best results. Effects may take months.
- **Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP)**
  A treatment done in the clinic using your own blood to promote hair growth. Some people see improvement, but more studies are needed.
- **Hair Transplant Surgery**
  Moves hair from one part of your scalp to another. Can be helpful in certain cases, but not everyone is a good candidate.

- It often takes 3 to 6 months (or longer) to start noticing improvement from any treatment. Stay consistent and be patient.

Home Care Tips

- Be gentle with your hair. Avoid tight styles and harsh brushing.
- Choose gentle shampoos. Avoid heat styling when possible.
- Eat a balanced diet with enough protein, iron, and healthy fats.
- Talk to your doctor before starting any supplements.
- Track changes and start treatment early for the best results.

Additional Information

Learn more at www.aad.org. Search “female pattern hair loss.”

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 9/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8550.