



GROWING PAINS

It's estimated that more than half of women in America will experience *hair loss*—and numbers may have only *risen during the pandemic*.

Stress—whether from a breakup, giving birth, contracting COVID-19, or simply living through the year-and-counting pandemic—can be a common trigger for hair loss. “When we experience abrupt changes, the body helps essential tissues thrive at the expense of nonessential tissues, like hair,” says Palm Beach, Florida-based psychologist Bridgette Hill, the founder of Root Cause Scalp Analysis. While losing up to 100 hairs a day is normal, some dermatologists say they are seeing more patients with excessive shedding than ever before. According to a study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, hair loss increased by more than 400 percent between November 2019 and August 2020 in two racially diverse New York City neighborhoods, most likely due to COVID-related inflammation or stress.

FDA-approved minoxidil (found in Rogaine) is the gold standard for over-the-counter treatments. But Beverly Hills dermatologist Ava Shamban, MD, says Redensyl, a blend of ingredients including a special peptide, may rival minoxidil, potentially with fewer side effects. “Peptides are our body’s messengers,” Shamban says. “They deliver news to cells, telling them to perform a specific function.” Redensyl, found in products like Philip B Scalp Booster (\$85) and The Ordinary Multi-Peptide Serum for Hair Density (\$18), communicates directly with hair stem cells to encourage healthy follicle activity.

For more dramatic results, you may want to consider an in-office treatment. A noninvasive option is HydraFacial Keravive, a “scalp facial” that includes exfoliation, a stimulating scalp serum, and red LED light. New York dermatologist Jessica Weiser, MD, also suggests KeraLase. This treatment starts with a laser (which creates small punctures in the scalp at the same depth as the hair follicle bulbs), followed by a serum rich in peptide and growth factors. “The serum triggers a new follicle, which leads to growth of new hair,” Weiser says.—MARGAUX ANBOUBA



ROOTING for You

Whether you're facing hair loss or simply want to grow your healthiest head of hair, Hill recommends this three-step scalp care routine.

1. PRETREAT

Moisturizing and maintaining the pH of your scalp is critical, Hill says. Fifteen minutes before showering, apply an anti-inflammatory mask or oil to scalp and strands.

Fable & Mane HoliRoots Hair Oil, \$34, fableandmane.com.

2. MASSAGE

Fill this palm-size brush with serum for a treatment that is both relaxing and rejuvenating to the scalp. Use circular motions to improve circulation and stimulate scalp muscles while removing dead skin cells.

WetBrush Head Start Exfoliating Scalp Massager (\$15); **Bread Beauty Supply Scalp-Serum: Exfoliating Scalp Treatment** (\$28).

3. WASH GENTLY

Choose your shampoo carefully: Swap in a hyaluronic acid or apple cider vinegar formula on occasion to remove product buildup without irritation.

Neutrogena Healthy Scalp Hydro Boost Shampoo with Hyaluronic Acid (\$12).—MA