

# 6 Causes of Baldness in Men

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By Cynthia Osterman Kenworthy

The stats around hair loss in men are stark: up to 40 percent of men in their thirties experience hereditary hair loss, and that number tops 50 percent by the age of 50. It can start as early as puberty, and in all, an estimated 50 million American men experience male pattern baldness, known as androgenetic alopecia to the scientists who study it. Genes play the biggest role, but hormones, diet and medication are also common causes among hair loss in men.



## What Causes Hair Loss in Men?

1. **Genetics:** Your family history is the biggest predictor of thinning hair, especially typical male pattern baldness. That means if other men in your family have had hair loss, you are more likely to as well. The conventional wisdom that its best predicted by your mother's side of the family.? Not backed up by the latest scientific research.
2. **Hormones:** Scientists aren't sure why, but cells in the scalps of men who are genetically disposed convert the main male hormone, testosterone, into another hormone known as DHT that causes follicles to shrink and eventually stop growing hair. The hormonal changes that occur during menopause are a common cause of thinning hair in women; in men, thyroid issues can also contribute to hair loss.

3. **Medical Conditions:** Male pattern baldness has also been associated with medical conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure, enlarged prostates, diabetes and obesity.
4. **Medications:** A variety of drugs are linked to hair loss including those used to treat arthritis, depression, high blood pressure, heart problems and, of course, cancer (hair that is lost during cancer treatments typically returns). Always talk to your doctor if you have any questions about medication regimens.
5. **Stressful Events:** A big shock to the system, whether caused by emotional or physical stress, can trigger thinning. Examples of such so-called trigger events include surgery or a death in the family.
6. **Scalp Disorders:** Conditions that cause hair thinning include ringworm, a fungal infection, and folliculitis, the inflammation of hair follicles often caused by a bacterial infection. Psoriasis and seborrheic dermatitis on the scalp may also lead to hair thinning .

Some studies have linked poor diet and smoking to hair loss, but the science is not conclusive on those factors as potential causes.

How can you tell if you're going bald? Male pattern baldness usually begins at the front of the scalp. The hair at the temples gradually moves back forming an "M" shape. Eventually as hair becomes thinner, a horseshoe pattern is created around the sides of the head. This is a sign of advanced male pattern baldness. In some cases hair can recede completely. While it's natural and even necessary to lose strands of hair daily, aggressive male pattern balding will result in more noticeable amounts of shedding. If you see more than a dozen or so hairs on your pillowcase after waking, or more than normal volumes of hair in your comb, this could be a sign of male pattern baldness.

If you're suddenly losing large clumps of hair, this can be the result of physical or emotional shock and/or stress or something more serious, like an underlying medical condition. If you're experiencing sudden hair loss, visit a doctor to determine the cause.

Looking for more information on the causes of hair loss? Visit ROGAINE® for more info on understanding hair loss.

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