

Exactly How Your Hair Transforms In Your 20s, 30s, And 40s

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If you feel like your hair used to be thicker or have a different texture, you're likely not imagining it. Just like our skin and bodies, our hair goes through changes as we age, starting in our twenties. We asked [Yael Halaas, M.D.](#), a facial plastic surgeon who specializes in hair loss and is a member of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, to explain what happens, as well as what we can do about it.

In Your 20's

Who doesn't experiment with their hair in their teens and twenties? From hair color changes, to heat styling for curling and straightening, to all kinds of hair product testing, Gaga's got nothing on us. The bad news is that this fun experimentation takes a toll on your strands, says [Halaas](#). Overuse of heat tools or over-processing hair (say if you're a chronic dye-er) can make it dry, brittle, and prone to breakage.

"Hormones also play a large role in hair texture at this age," she adds. For example, if you have a thyroid disorder—a common issue among women—your hair can become weakened and fall out or break more easily. On the other hand, if you become pregnant in your twenties, pregnancy hormones can actually help make your hair thick and shiny, she says.

Solution: If you think thinning is due to overuse of hair dyes and heat styling, the good news is that simple solutions can go a long way at this age. Take a break from applying heat, dye, and bleach, and you'll likely see noticeable improvement within a few weeks, says [Halaas](#). Choose gentle, sulfate-free shampoos and conditioners so that you don't strip strands while cleansing. Always use a heat-protecting spray when you use heat tools to straighten or curl your hair. "And most importantly, protect your hair from the sun—not a lot of people remember to wear hats, but it's a simple way of preventing further damage to your hair," advises [Halaas](#). Your doctor can also put you on a hormonal-regulating

medication (such as birth control) to combat hair loss related to hormonal conditions.

In Your 30s

If you've ever heard that hair can change completely every seven years, this isn't an old wife's tale, says **Halaas**—it's actually true. Hair actually grows in bundles inside the follicle—each one actually holds multiple hair strands. Unfortunately, with each passing decade, those bundles of hair often lose some strands, which leads to the overall slow thinning that many women notice as they get older, says **Halaas**.

Our thirties is also generally when we may begin to see graying as well—though this varies dramatically by person, and is thought to be genetic. Some people start graying as early as their early twenties, while others make it to their fifties and sixties with nary a gray hair.

Solution: "Taking biotin supplements can result in thicker, fuller, and healthier-looking hair," says **Halaas**. You can also focus on your vitamin B intake, since this essential nutrient helps carry nutrients and oxygen to your scalp which will help your hair grow, explains **Halaas**. Try adding B vitamins into your diet through whole grains, meat, seafood, and dark, leafy greens, suggests **Halaas**. Also, try to wash your hair no more than every other day. Over-washing can strip out your hair's naturally-produced sebum, which nourishes and moisturizes the scalp and helps keep hair healthy.

Here's how to blow-dry fine, thinning hair:

In Your 40s

Oncoming menopause is the big factor that often affects hair the most in this decade, as the body goes through numerous physical changes to adjust to unpredictable hormone levels. "Many women have unpleasant symptoms during menopause, from hair loss to overall hair thinning or even noticeable bald spots," says **Halaas**. Thinning can occur on the sides, front, or top of the head. Don't be surprised if you also notice more hair falling out while brushing and showering.

"Some research shows that hair loss during menopause is the result of a hormonal imbalance, specifically a lower production of estrogen and progesterone," explains **Halaas**. These hormones help hair grow faster and remain on your head in a resting phase for longer periods of time. Hair growth slows down and hairs becomes much thinner when the levels of estrogen and progesterone drop. You may also notice this thinning in your eyebrows, and that your body hair grows less fast and thick, too.

Solution: Certain medications can change the texture of your hair. Medications that control hormones (which are often prescribed in this decade) can have a huge impact on hair texture. For example, thyroid medications and birth control pills can often make hair fragile.

Sometimes women even experience hair loss on these medications—ironic, since some varieties can be prescribed to address hair loss. "Speak to your physician about possible hair loss and thinning side effects your prescription may have—there might be a possibility to change your medication for one without the side effects," suggests Halaas.

If hair loss is permanent, a possible solution is a hair transplant, says Halaas. It can be performed at any age, as well as anywhere on the head and eyebrows. Halaas uses the a micro-grafting technology known as Smart Graft on her patients. This means follicles are harvested one at a time and placed in the balding areas individually to replicate the natural contour of the hairline. Halaas says you should only pursue this treatment with a board-certified surgeon to ensure that the results are legit. There are also other options available, such as laser treatments, platelet-rich plasma treatments (PRP), and prescription medications. Talk to your dermatologist for recommendations on what type of procedure is right for you.