

# Traction Alopecia: Causes, Prevention and Treatment

## What Is Traction Alopecia?

Traction alopecia is a type of hair loss that, unlike androgenetic alopecia and alopecia areata, is caused by external factors, such as repeated pulling or tugging on the hair. It is common among women who are used to wearing their hair in a tight ponytail or braids, adding hair extensions, or using excessive heat to regularly style their hair. It can also occur in men, if they twist their beard too tightly.

The good news is, traction alopecia is reversible if you change your ways quickly. However, if no actions are taken, the hair loss may be permanent. But even in such a case, there are solutions for you to get back your hair.

## What Are the Symptoms of Traction Alopecia?

While one of the main traction alopecia symptoms is losing hair – mostly along the hairline in the front and on the sides – there are a number of early warning signs to look out for. Initially, little bumps may appear on the scalp. They may look like pimples, but if left untreated, they can then become bumps.

Other traction alopecia signs may include redness of the scalp, soreness or stinging, itching and scaling, and folliculitis. Some patients experience pus-filled blisters on their scalp.

Traction alopecia appears when the outside factors stress the follicle too much. Each follicle contains one strand of hair held together by a bulb, which acts as the strand's anchor. When the bulb is removed, hair loss eventually occurs. Hair breakage and split ends are equally damaging. Both result in traction alopecia due to excessive pulling.

## What Causes Traction Alopecia?

The main cause of traction alopecia is the excessive pulling of the hair, over time. This loosens the hair shafts in the follicles, or breaks your hair, leading it to thin out.

Some traction alopecia risk factors include:

- Pulling hair in a tight ponytail or bun
- Wearing braids or cornrows
- Wearing dreadlocks
- Incorporating hair extensions, weaves or hair pieces into your hair
- Sleeping with rollers

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People with longer hair are more susceptible to traction alopecia, as there is more even weight pulling on their scalp.

### **How to Prevent Traction Alopecia**

The best traction alopecia prevention is to wear let one's hair down.

Hair specialists also recommend simple changes you can make so that you don't damage your hair:

- If you wear a ponytail, make sure it is loose.
- Do thick braids instead of thin braids. Thin braids are more likely to break.
- Change your hair style every few weeks to give your hair a break.
- Use cloth bands for your hair instead of rubber or elastic bands. The latter tend to break hair.
- Take long breaks between wearing weaves or extensions.
- Use the low-heat setting on your hair dryer and flat iron.

Things to avoid include:

- Chemically processing your hair if you use weaves or braids. This puts too much stress on your hair.
- Hair relaxers and rollers.

### **How to Treat Traction Alopecia**

Before you begin your traction alopecia treatment, see a hair specialist who can confirm your diagnosis and rule out other hair loss causes. The treatment usually depends on the level of hair loss you are experiencing.

For recent and slight hair loss, your doctor may recommend simple stylistic changes. The best treatment for traction alopecia that is recent and slight is as simple as wearing your hair down and avoiding tight hair styles. A shorter hair style may be a welcome change, as it places less stress on the hair.

If you are already experiencing moderate symptoms, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics for the bumps on your head, or a steroid cream to relieve the swelling of the scalp.

If your hair loss from traction alopecia is severe and irreversible, your doctor may offer the FUE (follicular unit extraction) surgery. This procedure removes the follicles in the back of your head to the donor areas where you have permanently lost hair. An ARTAS hair transplant is

yet another option – a robotic surgery method that takes the human error out of FUE. The result is natural-looking hair with minimal scars.

Call us today at [\(954\) 945-2909](tel:(954)945-2909) for a free consultation.