



Every cancer. Every life.®

A high-angle photograph of two women sitting on a wooden floor. The woman in the upper center has a shaved head and is wearing a white long-sleeved top, smiling warmly at the woman in front of her. The woman in the foreground has long, wavy brown hair and is wearing a light green top. A laptop is open on a blue cushion to the right, and a potted plant is visible in the background.

How to Manage Hair Loss

Losing your hair can be one of the hardest parts of getting some kinds of cancer treatment. This booklet will help you learn how to deal with hair loss, including tips on getting ready for hair loss and choosing and caring for wigs, scarves, and hats.

Preparing for Hair Loss

What causes hair loss in people with cancer?

Our hair grows all the time, with old hairs falling out and new ones replacing them. But with some kinds of cancer treatment, your hair may stop growing for a while. This can lead to hair thinning and loss.

Not everyone who gets cancer treatment loses their hair. But certain treatments make it more likely that you will lose part or all your hair. These treatments include:

- Some types of chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy to the head and neck
- Stem cell or bone marrow transplant
- Some types of targeted therapy and immunotherapy

Hair thinning and loss happens most often on the head. But you might also lose your eyebrows, eyelashes, pubic hair, and the hair on your arms and legs.

Hair often starts falling out one to two weeks after starting treatment. Hair loss may happen quickly or fall out little by little as treatment continues. Many people lose their hair in clumps during shampooing or brushing.



Things you can do to prepare for hair loss

Ask your cancer care team if you are likely to lose your hair. If you are likely to lose your hair, ask whether you will lose it quickly or over time.

Ask whether a cooling cap might make you less likely to lose your hair. Cooling caps are used to reduce hair loss from chemotherapy treatment. But they are not recommended for everyone and can have some side effects. If you think you would like to use a cooling cap, talk to your cancer care team about the benefits, risks, and side effects of cooling caps.

Wigs and other scalp coverings may be partially or fully covered by your health insurance. You will likely need to pay for your wig and then file a reimbursement claim with your insurance provider. Ask your cancer care team for a wig prescription.

Many people choose to cut their hair very short or even shave their head before it starts falling out. This might help you have less discomfort when your hair starts to fall out.



Caring for your scalp and hair with hair loss

- Your scalp may feel itchy or tender. Be gentle when brushing and washing your hair. Using a wide-toothed comb may help.
- Try not to brush or pull too much on your hair. This might help you not lose as much hair. Avoid making braids or ponytails, using rollers, blow drying, or using curling or flat irons.
- If you lose most or all of your hair, be sure to protect the skin on your scalp from heat, cold, and sun. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 and wear a hat. In cold weather, wear a hat or scarf to cover your head and stay warm.

- When new hair starts to grow, it may break easily for a while. Avoid perms and dyes for the first few months. Try keeping your hair short and easy to style.
- When your hair starts to grow back, it may be a different texture or color. Over time, it will likely go back to the way it was before treatment.



Tell your cancer care team if you have trouble dealing with hair loss so you can get help.

Finding the Best Wig for You

If cancer treatment has caused you to lose some or all of your hair, you may find it helpful to wear a wig.

For more information about wigs, visit EverYou.com to explore our EverYou™ program. It offers a curated selection of quality wigs, headwear, and post-surgical products to help people keep feeling like themselves during and after treatment.

Wig sizing guide

1. Measure circumference.



2. Measure front to back.



3. Measure side to side.



Size chart

Important notes: To measure accurately, wet your hair to flatten it as much as possible. If your measurements don't exactly match those on the size chart, choose the size closest to the largest measurement. Velcro® tabs inside each wig can adjust circumference up to 5 inches larger or smaller to ensure a secure fit.

Wig size	1. Circumference	2. Front to back	3. Ear to ear
Petite	21 inches	13 ³ / ₈ inches	12 ⁷ / ₈ - 13 inches
Average	21 ¹ / ₂ inches	14 ¹ / ₂ - 14 ³ / ₄ inches	13 ³ / ₈ inches
Large	23 inches	14 ⁷ / ₈ - 15 ¹ / ₄ inches	13 ⁷ / ₈ inches

Choosing the right color

- Before treatment, cut a large lock of hair from the front of your head to compare to wig colors.
- Compare your hair to wig swatches in outside light to get the best color match.
- As we age, a lighter color is often more flattering and gives a more natural look.
- Chemo can make your face look pale. If you have black hair, consider choosing a dark brown wig for a more flattering look.
- If you're a brunette and are going gray, consider a wig in a lighter shade of brown with subtle highlights. White wigs can look nice, too.



Types of wigs

You can find wigs in many styles, materials, and fits to meet your needs and preferences. Here's an overview of the types and cap construction of wigs you might find.

Synthetic wigs

Synthetic wigs are made from artificial fibers such as polyester, acrylic, or a blend. These wigs are liked because they are less expensive, easier to take care of, and come in a wide range of colors and styles.

Human hair wigs

Made from human hair, these wigs are versatile and the most natural looking. You can style, color, and treat them just like natural hair. They also blend well with any hair you have.

Heat-friendly wigs

Heat-resistant wigs are made from synthetic fibers that are made to resist damage from heat sources. Most heat-friendly wigs can be flat-ironed, curled, or blown dry using styling tools up to 350°F/180°C.

Types of wig-cap construction

Lace-front wigs

Lace-front wigs have a sheer lace panel along the front hairline. This helps the front look like your natural hairline and helps

blend with your skin. Lace-front wigs allow for versatile styling, including off-the-face looks and parting options.

Full-lace wigs

Full-lace wigs have a lace cap that covers the entire head. This allows for the most versatility in styling. Wearers can part the hair in any direction and style it in updos and ponytails without showing the wig's base. This makes them ideal for the most natural appearance and styling options.

Monofilament wigs

Monofilament wigs are made using a fine mesh material at the crown or throughout the entire cap. This looks more like the natural scalp. These wigs allow for parting in many ways and give the look of hair growing directly from the scalp for a more realistic look.

Hand-tied wigs

Hand-tied wigs are made using individual hair strands hand-tied to the cap. They are very comfortable, flexible, and move like your natural hair would. These wigs are very lightweight and breathable so they are ideal if you have a sensitive scalp or are getting chemotherapy that can cause hair loss.



Styling your wig

- Many wig styles, especially shorter ones, only need to be shaken before they are ready to wear.
- For a more natural look, don't try to get every hair into place.
- To give your wig a different look, think about using a wig styling gel. Just apply it with your hands to sculpt your wig into the style you want. This gel not only boosts volume, but also ensures your style stays put. Experiment until you discover your perfect look.
- You may want your hairstylist to trim and/or thin the bangs or trim the length of the wig to suit your face. It can help to use a chin strap to keep your wig in place while styling or trimming.
- Once you are happy with the style, you can hold it in place with hairspray. Wig hairspray is best for synthetic wigs and can be used on human hair wigs as well.

- Do not use a color rinse on your synthetic wig; it will damage the fibers.
- Do not use a hair dryer or curling iron on your wig unless your wig is heat-resistant.



Wig care

When not wearing your wig:

- Use a wig stand to store it for short periods of time (overnight or for a few days).
- Fold it carefully and put it back in its box if you need to store the wig for longer periods of time.

To wash your wig:

- Only use hair care products.
- Before washing, gently brush your wig or hairpiece to remove teasing or tangles.

- Use one ounce of synthetic wig shampoo in two quarts of cold water (never hot).
- Soak three to five minutes, then gently dip up and down. Do not rub.
- Rinse thoroughly in cold water.
- Pat out excess water in a towel. Do not brush or comb until thoroughly dry.
- Allow your wig to dry at room temperature. No setting is necessary; curls will snap back into position when the hair is completely dry.

Protect your wig from heat

- Do not use a hair dryer, blow dryer, or curling iron unless the wig is heat-friendly.
- Avoid heat from stove burners or from opening an oven door.
- Sudden bursts of heat can damage your wig, so be careful about getting close to an open flame or gas burner.

Wigs require special care. It is best to only use hair care products, such as shampoo, conditioner, and wig gel, specially made for wigs. Visit [EverYou.com](https://www.EverYou.com) for a curated selection of quality wigs, headwear, and other products.

Tips for Choosing and Wearing Headwear

Hats, scarves, and turbans provide comfortable options if you've lost your hair but don't want to wear a wig.

Choosing the right headwear

Choosing the right size hat is just as important as picking a style. Look for hats that come in sizes or can be adjusted to fit you well. If a hat is too big, think about adding a padded liner to provide fullness and a snug fit.

Knowing your head size

Use a tape measure to go around your head starting in the back and around above your eyebrows and ears. If your head measures between size ranges, choose the larger size.

Size	Head Circumference
Petite/Average	21¼ - 22¾ inches
Large	22¾ - 23½ inches

Choosing the right fabric

Bamboo, silk, and cotton are among the softest materials for people who are having hair loss. They tend to be the most gentle on the scalp.

Hats with soft cotton or bamboo linings are often suggested. For unlined hats and wigs, think about adding a liner that absorbs and wicks away sweat to keep you comfortable all day.

Organic fabrics might be a good choice for people with sensitive scalps. These fabrics are free from many chemicals that might cause itchiness and irritation in some people.



Choosing the right hat

Consider these tips to select a hat that works best with your face and body type:

- Newsboys and medium-brim hats look good on most people. If you have a round face, avoid hats that are round on top.
- If your face is longer, choose a wider brim for the most flattering look.

- If you are a small woman, avoid very large hats that may overpower your features.
- If you are a larger woman, look for larger hats that are more in proportion with your body.
- Add length to your face by wearing a headband or scarf under your hat so you can angle it. Longer earrings and halos also help.
- Some people like to wear bangs or a halo under their hat. These are hairpieces that are open on top but give the look of hair under a hat or scarf.

For a better night's sleep

Sleep is key to good physical and mental health, but many people getting cancer treatment have sleep problems.





Wearing a sleep cap may help you feel more comfortable and get a better night's sleep:

- Your scalp may become very sensitive during chemo. A sleep cap can reduce the friction between your scalp and the pillowcase, which may lessen irritation.
- A sleep cap made of bamboo fabric can help regulate your body's temperature. During warm nights, a bamboo sleep cap can also help you feel cool.

Trying new colors and styles can bring joy to you and those around you. Give yourself permission to experiment and have fun with your headwear!

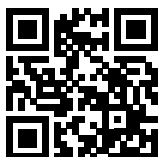


This booklet gives you information about ways to deal with hair loss from cancer treatment. You will learn about:

- What to do before you lose your hair
- How to find the best wig for you
- Choosing and wearing other kinds of headwear.



For more information and answers about hair loss, visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/hairloss or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.



For information about wigs and other head coverings, the American Cancer Society EverYou™ program offers a curated selection of quality wigs, headwear, and post-surgical products, including bras and breast forms, to help people keep feeling like themselves during and after treatment. Visit EverYou.com to view the selection or call **1-800-850-9445**.



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