

# Post-Operative Hair Loss

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WILL I LOSE MY HAIR AFTER WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY?

This is one of the most frequent concerns bariatric pre-op patients have when they come for nutrition pre-op counseling. Hair shedding does occur in some weight loss surgery patients as a side effect of rapid weight loss.

### Hair Growth Stages

Hair follicles have two stages:

- **Anogen** – a growth phase. Hair follicles are on “working mode” and hair grows normally.
- **Telogen** – a dormant or resting phase. Think of the hair follicles as taking a break and being on “sleeping mode.”

During rapid weight loss, the hair follicles are on resting phase or “Telogen effluvium,” which is an alteration in the hair cycle that results from emotional or physical stress and is unrelated to protein malnutrition, or vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

### Expectations

This hair shedding phase is expected to happen during the rapid weight loss period the first 6 – 10 months. As weight stabilizes, it will resolve on its own.

### CAN I PREVENT HAIR LOSS?

Unfortunately, there is nothing the patient can do to prevent hair shedding, but you may be able to reduce shedding with a proactive approach, including:

1. **Protein:** Meeting your protein goals will help hair grow strong and healthy.
2. **Vitamins and minerals.** Compliance with the vitamin regimen will help prevent any vitamin and mineral deficiencies.
3. **Fluids:** You probably have heard this one thousand times, and this will be one-thousand-one. Fluid goals are 80 ounces per day.

### Things to Remember

If you notice significant hair loss after 12 months, contact the bariatric team for assessment.

If you have concerns about your protein or vitamin and mineral intake, contact the bariatric dietitian for assistance.

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