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Part two of a three-part series

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Hair Hopes and Happenings

My Hair is Gone

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Welcome back to this edition of "Hair Hopes and Happenings" a series designed to provide you with information on your hair before, during and after treatment.

If you are in the middle of treatment and your hair has shed or you have shaved your head and are looking to address questions about this new uncharted territory, this series is for you.

Here are the answers to the questions most frequently asked:

How do I care for my scalp?

Throughout the day, it's essential to protect your skin and scalp by using a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, preferably one that offers moisturization and is waterproof. When you're outdoors, including activities like driving or running errands, consider also wearing a hat, wig, or scarf, as some medications may induce or exacerbate photosensitivity. In the evening, focus on relieving dryness by using a combination of an oil and moisturizer. Reserve the use of oil for nighttime, as it can make your scalp more susceptible to sunburn. For scalp cleansing, opt for a gentle shampoo, just as you would for your hair, or you can use your favorite facial cleanser.

Do I need sunscreen under my wig/scarf?

Maybe. If your wig features a monofilament top, designed to create a natural appearance as though your hair is growing from the scalp, then it's advisable to wear sunscreen. If you're uncertain, a simple test can help you determine whether it's necessary. Hold your wig up to a source of light, and if you can see through it, that means the sun can also penetrate it and reach your scalp. The same test applies to your scarf; if it's sheer, it's a good idea to apply sunscreen. Just wait for the sunscreen to set for about twenty minutes before wearing your wig or scarf, and be sure to blot away any excess. Avoid wearing moisturizer beneath your wig, as it may potentially affect the integrity of any hand-tied sections of your wig. Save the additional moisturizing routine for nighttime.

My head gets cold at night but I am having hot flashes. What can I do?

Fluctuations in temperature can significantly disrupt the quality of your sleep. When we lose the hair on our heads, we also lose a means of

regulating body heat. This, when combined with hot flashes, can create less than ideal sleeping conditions. I recommend a partial coverage approach, similar to the feeling of keeping one foot out of the covers. Consider using a cotton bandana-style scarf, a triangular piece that wraps around your hairline, goes behind your ears, and ties at the base of your head. This provides coverage on top while remaining open in the back, ensuring both comfort for a cool head and a means of heat escape for those experiencing hot flashes. Alternatively, you can modify your favorite nighttime head covering by adding some ventilation around the crown of the head with a few strategic cuts using a pair of scissors.

I have new growth. Is my hair coming back?

Hair growth occurs in three distinct cycles: the growth phase, the resting phase, and the shedding phase. These cycles overlap, with new hair continuously growing while some remain in a resting state and others are shedding. Have you ever wondered why, after shaving your legs, you can feel stubble on the same day? It's because of these ongoing growth cycles. So, even as your hair is shedding during

treatment, new hairs are simultaneously emerging. Give your hair some time to fully recover - new growth is in progress, but you may still notice some shedding until the treatment is complete.

Should I keep shaving my head?

Given that hair typically grows at a rate of about half an inch per month, and I don't recommend shaving it down to the scalp initially, but rather leave it at around $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch, most women undergoing treatment may not need to shave their heads again during this period. Nevertheless, it's advisable to trim your hair to maintain a neat appearance as it regrows.

I recommend keeping your hair short until it has reached a sufficient thickness to cover your scalp before allowing it to grow out in length. In other words, if your scalp still appears sparse, continue trimming your hair until you achieve the desired thickness. Allow your hair some time to grow back thicker and stronger before transitioning to a longer style.



My wig doesn't fit now that my hair is gone. What can I do?

If you shopped for a wig with long or thick hair and now your hair has shed or you have shaved it, you might be experiencing a looser than desired fit. Most wigs come with adjustability features, such as bra-like hooks or Velcro fasteners at the base of the wig. To address this issue, follow these steps:

1. Turn the wig so that the interior base is exposed.
2. Locate the fastener at the back of the wig.
3. Make an adjustment by moving it slightly toward the center of the back.
4. Be cautious not to overtighten it all at once, as this could lead to discomfort or create excess fabric at the crown, potentially causing headaches.
5. Begin with a small adjustment and, if it still feels too loose, consider using a wig grip headband designed to prevent the wig from slipping. You can find one online or at a local wig retailer.

This should help you achieve a more secure and comfortable fit for your wig.

My scarf won't stay on. What can I do?

For a smooth and secure fit with silky or slippery scarves, consider using a wig grip headband. These versatile accessories can be conveniently purchased online or at a wig or beauty supply store. A wig grip headband features adjustable Velcro closures and is primarily designed to keep wigs in place, but it works well for scarves too.

Here's how to use it: Once you've positioned the headband on your head, tie your scarf in your preferred style. To further enhance its stability, you can use bobby pins to secure the scarf to the wig grip headband. Simply slide a bobby pin on each side near your ears, or for added security, use two bobby pins on each side in a crisscross fashion, forming an "X" pattern. Ensure that the pins are discreetly hidden behind your ears while attaching the scarf to the wig grip headband with the pins.

My hat gives me a headache. What can I do?

If prior to hair loss you've not been wearing a hat regularly and are now experiencing headaches, it may be related to this change in your routine. To address this, consider reducing the daily hours you spend wearing the hat. Pay attention to the fit of the hat, including its tightness and how much of your head's surface it covers. For instance, notice whether the hat fits snugly all over, like a ball cap, or if it mainly touches the outer edges of your head, as is the case with a fedora-style hat. If the contact area is too snug it can increase the chances of a headache. You can add a scarf under your hat to cover your head if you have concerns about the hat coming off and exposing your head.

I am still working out, but my wig is hot. What can I do?

Wigs are designed to promote ventilation, yet they can retain heat, particularly during physical activities. Partial wig and hat combinations provide a convenient solution. This partial wig is specially created to offer a natural hair appearance with a baseball cap-style top. The top resembles a standard ball cap, with hair attached along the hat's perimeter. These combinations are especially well-suited for workouts. If your sport involves wearing a helmet, there are also partial wigs designed to be worn beneath a bandana, allowing you to

place your helmet on top. In this setup, the hair is positioned on the sides, while the bandana helps absorb sweat, and the helmet serves as head protection.

I lost more hair than expected with cold caps. What should I do?

If you've experienced more hair loss than expected while using a cold capping system, my suggestion is to refrain from cutting your hair until the treatment is completed. Accessing the extent of your remaining hair is key. Once you have a sense of how much hair you have left, you can explore your options. One option is a wig topper, which is a hairpiece that covers the top of your head and the length covers the sides of your head blending with your existing hair without being a full wig. Wig toppers are available in both human hair and synthetic styles. Human hair toppers can be custom colored to match your existing hair both can be cut to match your style. In addition to wig toppers, some women may find that a fabric headband can

suffice, depending on the areas where they've experienced the most hair loss. Others may opt for a combination of wig toppers and scarves or hats until their natural hair regrows to the length of the hair left after treatment. If you eventually decide to cut your hair shorter, that remains an option, but I recommend seeing how much of your hair is available before making a decision.

That is all for part two of this series. I hope you find this information useful. Please feel free to reach out to livelearnshine@brightermagazine.org with comments or questions and stay tuned for the next issue where we will cover regrowth strategies. B

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