

About AASA

The Alopecia Areata Support Association was established in the 1980s. A group of people with alopecia, together with the parents of some affected children, organised a mutual support group.

The aims of AASA are to:

- ◆ **Provide accurate and up to date information on alopecia** to members and the wider community
- ◆ **Support people with alopecia and their family and friends**
- ◆ **Provide opportunities for people affected by alopecia to share their experiences and learn from each other**
- ◆ **Advocate for better services**

What is Alopecia Areata?

Alopecia Areata is an unpredictable and somewhat mysterious condition. It is probably caused by an autoimmune process in which the body mistakenly attacks hair follicles. The result is that hairs are prevented from growing and fall out.

The least severe form (alopecia areata) is limited to defined bald patches which can occur on any part of the body, frequently the scalp. This form often spontaneously regrows and may or may not recur. Loss of all head hair is called alopecia totalis.

The most severe form (alopecia universalis) results in complete hair loss, including eyebrows, eyelashes and nasal hair. It is more difficult to treat successfully, and is more likely if a person's first attack occurs in childhood.

Generally alopecia does not cause other health problems, although people who lose nasal hair and eyelashes may suffer irritation because hairs no longer protect their eyes and nose from dust and dirt.

Living with Hair Loss

Perhaps the major consequence of losing one's hair is a loss of self confidence and the development of an often intense and painful self consciousness.

Living self confidently is a major challenge for people who lose their hair. There are a number of things which seem to assist people on this journey.

- ◆ Having someone with whom to discuss difficulties. This could be family, or friends or a health professional such as a psychologist.
- ◆ If necessary, obtaining a wig which the person likes and which gives confidence and a sense of security when wearing it.
- ◆ Talking to other people with alopecia about those 'living with alopecia' issues which only they know about. For example how to deal with difficult people or situations and good options for head coverings other than a wig.

Treatments

There is a range of treatments used in alopecia. You will find more about them on our web page, but the best source of information is your dermatologist.

If you are trying to decide on whether to have a particular treatment, Karen Carey-Hazell, consumer advocate, suggests asking your healthcare provider the following three questions:

- ◆ Question 1: What are my treatment options?
- ◆ Question 2: What are the possible outcomes of those options?
- ◆ Question 3: How likely is each of the outcomes to occur?

For more copies of this brochure, see contact details on the back panel

Our Services

AASA is a not for profit, self help group, incorporated in Victoria.

Our services include an

- ◆ Annual Open Day (expert speakers and demonstrations)
- ◆ Quarterly meetings in Melbourne, and some regional support groups, a
- ◆ Quarterly newsletter and a
- ◆ Message Bank for enquiries about alopecia

AASA has good relationships with the relevant health services, particularly dermatologists

Contact

AASA
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Phone: 0395138580 (Message Bank)
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Alopecia Areata Support Association (Vic) Inc.

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Information and support for people with
alopecia