

## HAIR LOSS AND SKIN CHANGES (DOC-11)

Unfortunately hair loss is a very real side effect of surgery and it can be a disheartening problem. Hair loss happens because the hair follicles grow in cycles over several months. The shock of surgery, lower caloric & protein intake, and anesthesia cause the hair follicle to stop growing. Because this may happen any where in the growth cycle you often don't see the hair loss right after surgery but a few months after surgery. The hair loss WILL STOP. The tips below can help slow hair loss and encourage new hair growth, however because of the hair follicle's growth cycle it may take several months before you start seeing new hair growth.

The same reason for the hair loss can also cause changes in your skin texture and appearance. It is not uncommon for patients to develop acne or dry skin after surgery. The protein, vitamins and calcium are also important to health skin. You can also try using a very emollient cream for dry skin and keeping acne skin clean and oil free. These problems will go away.

- Protein intake is extremely important for healing, hair growth and to prevent muscle wasting. After surgery you need 80 gm or more of protein every day. Again while you are going through the weight loss period your body does not care if it loses fat mass or muscle mass. The best way to enhance hair growth, fat mass loss and prevent muscle loss is to get 80 gm or more of protein daily and to exercise daily.
- Multivitamins with minerals every day are also an important supplement because if you are deficient in vitamins and minerals then your body takes the essential vitamins for the general running of your body and doesn't give the unessential things like hair and nails what they need to grow.
- Nioxin shampoo has been traditionally used by cancer and chemo patients but some GRDS patients have had good luck with it also.
- Biotin tablets or powder are great for healthy hair, skin, and nails. 600-1000 mcg daily and can be found at most health food, vitamin or beauty supply store. Also assist the body in turning fat mass into usable energy.
- Folicure tablets and shampoo can also help. They can be found at Sally's Beauty Supply.
- Zinc 50mg tablets every other day for no more than a month. Zinc blood levels can get too high after this period of time. Zinc can interfere with iron absorption at higher levels. Zinc helps with protein synthesis and collagen formation (both ingredients for hair growth). Inactivity can lower the body's levels of zinc another reason why exercise is important.

Folate is helpful if you develop a fine acne type rash on your skin. You can add an additional tablet daily for 30 days and the rash should resolve. Please call the office if it persists or does not get better after a week of taking the additional supplementation.