

Hair Loss Camouflage

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about ways to conceal hair loss. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is Hair Camouflage?

Hair camouflage refers to different techniques that can disguise areas of thinning hair and hair loss. These techniques can include concealers, hair pieces/wigs, scalp tattooing and hair styling strategies. They are designed to provide a cosmetic effect, ranging from temporary to permanent, that can help improve the appearance of hair loss.

Topical Hair Fibres

Topical hair fibres are a form of very fine synthetic fibres that come in the form of a spray or dusting powder. These fibres stick to existing hair on the head and create an instant illusion of more volume. As these fibres require existing hair to bind to, this makes them a suitable option for fine or thinning hair but less so for large bald patches. Hair fibres are available in several hair colours to match your hair and hair colours can be mixed to create a colour most closely matched to your own. A fixing spray, usually sold separately, can be applied afterwards to set the fibres for a whole day. Hair fibres require daily application to achieve the appearance of thicker hair and may wash off on contact with water.

Known brands of keratin fibres include **Nanogen Hair Thickening Keratin Fibres** and **Toppik Hair Fibres**.

Scalp Concealers

Scalp concealers can come in liquid or powder forms, working similarly to facial concealers and are designed to reduce the colour difference between your scalp and hair. Powder

concealers can be applied with sponges or brushes to conceal bare areas of scalp with a colour that matches your hair. Liquid scalp concealers commonly come in the form of sprays but also less commonly can come in gels and creams. Many of these products are designed to be water resistant but can be washed off. They similarly require daily application. Scalp concealers can be purchased online or in a cosmetic store.

Powder Scalp Concealers: Dermatch Waterproof Hair Loss Concealer, Thicken It Scalp Coverage Hair Powder

Liquid Scalp Concealers: Jerome Russell Spray-On Hair Colour Thickener, BOLDIFY Hair Thickening Spray

Wigs and Hair Pieces

In more advanced hair loss, hair pieces or wigs may be more suitable. Wigs can be made from synthetic fibres or human hair. Synthetic wigs are less expensive and can be easily maintained but do not last as long as human hair. Human hair wigs can look very natural and can be styled how you wish but require more maintenance and are more expensive. Wigs can be purchased online but it is recommended to go to a wig salon to obtain advice on size and fit. Wigs may also be available on the NHS but you might be charged a fee unless you qualify for financial help.

Scalp Tattooing

Scalp tattooing is a more permanent way to conceal hair loss by tattooing the scalp in a way that replicates natural hair follicles creating an illusion of fuller hair. It is suitable for various types of hair loss. This method of hair camouflage should be avoided during a flare up of any inflammatory condition of the scalp or if you are prone to developing keloids. The number of treatments required will depend on how much of the scalp

needs treating. Scalp micropigmentation tattooing is available at specialist hair clinics or hair replacement services. This is a non-medical cosmetic procedure and it is important to choose an experienced tattooist carefully.

Hair Transplant

A hair transplant is a surgical procedure that involves moving an area of natural hair to thinning patches or, in artificial hair transplants, implanting artificial hairs. In hair transplants using your own hair, an area of hair follicles from the scalp is moved to the affected area of hair loss. Hair transplants are not advised in alopecia areata. The procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic with a short recovery time.

Hair transplants are not available on the NHS but they are offered at independent clinics and can cost between £1,000 to £30,000. When considering a hair transplant, it is important to choose a clinic that is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and to select an experienced and qualified surgeon, one that is registered with the British Association of Hair Restoration Surgery.

Styling Strategies

Additional options to disguise hair loss include using headwear or understanding which hair styles can be most concealing.

For large areas of hair loss, headwear including headscarves, turbans, bandanas or hats can be an extra tool. These types of headwear are available across various shops but it is also possible to buy headwear specifically designed for medical causes of hair loss.

For thinning hair, there are several styling products that can work together with camouflage products. For volume, hair plumping powders or volume sprays can give elevated volume

and root boost, creating better hold. Different haircuts or styles may help create a reduced appearance of hair thinning so consider finding an experienced hairdresser to offer suitable tailored advice.

Useful Sources of Information

- Cosmetic Management
 - https://bhns.org.uk/index.php?/cosmetic-management-of-alopecia_new.html/
 - <https://www.alopecia.org.uk/Pages/Category/appearance-tips>
- Wigs
 - <https://www.alopecia.org.uk/wigs>
- Wig Costs
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/wigs-and-fabric-supports-on-the-nhs/>
- Wig Salons
 - <http://www.mynewhair.org/salon-finder/>
- Hair Transplant
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cosmetic-procedures/hair-transplant/>
- Emotional Support
 - Alopecia UK
 - [What we do | Alopecia UK](#)

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer). **Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



Reference: DER_HLC_LP_01 Published: June 2022 Review date: June 2024