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This Hair Stylist's Instagram Video Shows the Reality of Hair Loss After Pregnancy

Nothing like that "postpregnancy shed," man



Having a baby comes with a unique set of side effects. One that isn't often talked about: a lot more hair loss than usual. Christina Kreitel, a new mom and owner of Intrepid Studio Salon in Utah, is exceptionally familiar with this effect. Not only does she have firsthand experience with her own hair, but she's noticed it in her clients' hair as well.

She posted a video on Instagram of herself actually pulling out a massive clump of a woman's hair—and the post went viral, with over 3 million views as of this writing.

“Haha!!! Nothing like that Post Pregnancy Shed man!!!!” she captioned the video. “You know the time, 4 months postpartum and you FILL that drain!”

“This is something I knew would be so relatable and no one ever talks about,” Krietal tells SELF.

This is also something she sees in her salon “constantly,” although every woman's experience is different. “Some are worse than this; some not nearly so,” she says.

Krietal also admitted in the caption that she's going through postpartum hair loss, too, and likes to collect the excess hair on the wall of her shower. “So grossly satisfying,” she added.

There's an actual medical term for this—telogen effluvium—and it's pretty common with new mothers.

The condition is a common form of hair loss in women, according to the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD). Normally, your hair goes through three phases: growth, a transitional phase when growing stops, and a resting period (aka telogen). At the end of the resting period, hair falls out.

We shed between 50 and 100 hairs in the telogen phase *per day*.

But stressors—including giving birth, undergoing surgery, or losing a loved one—can throw things out of whack. Stress causes your hair to prematurely go into the telogen phase, the Mayo Clinic explains. Then, when stronger new hair grows in a few months later, it pushes out the weak hair, which causes shedding—and a lot of it since you had more hair than usual in that resting phase, **Gary Goldenberg, M.D.**, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, tells SELF.

As you can imagine, hormones also play a role. When you're pregnant, the levels of estrogen in your body are higher than normal—that keeps your hair full and slows down or stops normal hair loss, women's health expert Jennifer Wider, M.D., tells SELF. After the baby is born, your estrogen levels drop, creating hair loss that's more noticeable because it includes the hair that would have normally fallen out at normal rates during your pregnancy, she explains.

Sudden hair loss can definitely be freaky. But, for many people, it's totally normal right after giving birth.

Telogen effluvium usually starts three or four months after you have a baby and it can take up to nine months for your hair to go back to normal, the AAD says. So you could be dealing with this for a while. “It can definitely be distressing psychologically, especially with emotions being high in the postpartum period,” Christine Greves, M.D., a board-certified ob/gyn at the Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women and Babies. Still, she reminds her patients that it's usually temporary and very rarely leads to permanent hair loss.

Unfortunately, there's not much you can do to prevent it. Krietal says she recommends that her clients keep taking their prenatal vitamins, but “regardless, it's just going to happen.” You may be tempted to use minoxidil (Rogaine) after you give birth to help get your hair back to normal, but the FDA warns that it may not be safe if you're nursing. (If you're not breastfeeding, though, it can be helpful, Dr. Goldenberg says.)

If you're really stressed about the possibility of losing some of your hair or it's not getting better with time, it's worth checking in with your doctor or a dermatologist. They may suggest a treatment known as platelet rich plasma, which involves a dermatologist injecting your own blood into your scalp. Your blood cells then stimulate hair growth and can prevent telogen effluvium. This can be done during and after your pregnancy and is "very helpful," Dr. Goldenberg says.

That said, losing a bit of hair after giving birth is totally normal and temporary—not something you need to be ashamed of. "Remember that it's worth it for that perfect little human you made," Krietal says.