

Carol Walker opens the door to her world of trichology in her series of columns in *SalonFocus*

Walker's World



Photograph by Stephen Graham

Postpartum and telogen effluvium sound like something out of a *Tolkein* fantasy. But they are a distressing fact of life for many people, writes trichologist Carol Walker

Fine, thinning hair affects many people of all ages and it can cause a great deal of distress.

The reasons can be varied such as medical, illness, hormonal and stress or a combination of all these.

It is a problem that can affect self-esteem and interfere in every aspect of a person's life from social to business.

But if prompt intervention is sought, then the treatments may be more effective.

That is when registered trichologists can come into their own and provide advice for both hairdresser and client.

The most common hair loss seen within the salon is shedding.

Hair shedding can follow illnesses and physical and emotional stress. It may not necessarily happen immediately after a specific event and can occur three to four months afterwards.

The two most commonly seen are similar in appearance – postpartum – which often occurs following the birth of a baby, and telogen effluvium, which can affect anyone and at any age.



Hair loss affects men and women equally

Postpartum often occurs after the mother has stopped lactating. In the case of telogen effluvium 30%-40% of hair loss over the entire scalp can be experienced.

Hair loss in this phase is not normally permanent and rectifies itself once the situation or conditions have been addressed either through a good hair style, a consultation with a trichologist or medication.

Within time, natural regeneration of hair occurs, and it can be seen as new tapered hair growth.

Hair loss will affect most people at some point in their lives. This can be from minor changes around the front hairline and temples, and also at puberty and adolescence.

The hormonal changes in the vertex, which is from the front hairline to the crown, during the post-menopausal phase is known as Androgenic Alopecia and is seen as "diffuse" thinning in this region.

Few women are exempt from this condition, and it is only extremely rarely that total hair loss occurs. However, this condition is more aggressive in men.

Going through my records, it would appear that some 35% of women aged 25-35 suffer from some form of hair loss. This increases with age to around 70% for post-menopausal females, with further changes thereafter. These changes are normally so slow that the majority of women are not aware of the physical changes that are taking place.

It is only when friends, a member of the family or their hairdressers draw it to their attention that they realise.

But once it has been highlighted, it can

make you feel depressed and your self-confidence can nosedive.

Hair loss affects men and women equally, so for every male you see with hair loss,

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there is a female. Men have two options – to conceal or not to conceal.

Society makes the female feel obliged to conceal her thinning hair, and this can often be with the help of their hairdresser, and perhaps accompanied by the use of product at home.

Therefore, with so many clients, they need your creative and magic touch; you can be the inspiration that they really need in offering a wide variety of salon services, and with the correct advice you can affect the volume and density that they need.

Once you have mastered handling fine hair, and with the aid of mousses, gels and hairsprays, you can then try more adventurous styles and create out of your "thinking caps" more adventurous miracles.

• *I am happy to answer questions of a trichological nature. Please address questions to sfeditor@salonfocus.co.uk putting "Carol Walker" in the subject box.*