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Ozempic and Hair Loss: What the Research Actually Shows

A guide for anyone on, or considering, a GLP-1 weight loss medication

If you've started noticing more hair in the shower drain a few months into taking Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro, or Zepbound, you're not imagining it, and you're not alone. Hair thinning has become one of the most commonly reported side effects among people on GLP-1 medications, even though it doesn't appear on the official list of side effects for most of these drugs.

This isn't a reason to panic, and for most people it isn't permanent. But it's worth understanding what's actually happening, why it happens, and what helps, because the explanation is more about the weight loss than it is about the drug itself.

What's Actually Causing the Hair Loss

GLP-1 medications work by mimicking a hormone that regulates appetite and blood sugar (GLP-1 stands for glucagon-like peptide-1). They aren't designed to affect hair follicles, and there's no evidence that the drug itself damages hair at the root.

What the research points to instead is a condition called telogen effluvium, a temporary, whole-scalp shedding triggered by physical stress on the body. Rapid weight loss, illness, surgery, and major dietary change can all trigger it. Hair grows in cycles, and each strand spends most of its life in a growth phase before resting and shedding naturally. When the body goes through a significant stressor, a much larger share of hairs gets pushed into that resting-and-shedding phase at once, which shows up a few months later as noticeably more shedding than usual.

Dr. Kathy Zhou, endocrinologist, Cleveland Clinic

"Most of your hair is usually in a growth phase, but when your body experiences a stressor, more hair gets pushed into the resting phase."

This is why hair changes with GLP-1 medications tend to show up around the three-month mark rather than immediately after starting treatment, and why they're more common in people who lose weight quickly or in large amounts.

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What the Clinical Trials and Real-World Data Show

The licensing trials for semaglutide (sold as Ozempic and Wegovy) give the clearest starting point. In the STEP 1 trial, which followed 1,961 adults over 68 weeks and produced an average weight loss of nearly 15%, alopecia (hair loss) was reported in about 3% of participants on semaglutide compared with roughly 1% on placebo. The longer STEP 5 trial, run over two years, found a similar pattern, with alopecia reported in around 3.2% of participants.

A more recent analysis added detail to that picture. Researchers reviewing the FDA's adverse event reporting database found that reports of alopecia were more than twice as common among people taking semaglutide or tirzepatide (the active ingredient in Mounjaro and Zepbound) compared with the general reporting population.

One finding in particular stands out: the amount of weight lost seems to matter more than the drug itself. Among trial participants who lost more than 20% of their body weight, the alopecia rate was noticeably higher than among those who lost less than 20%. In other words, the faster and more dramatic the weight loss, the greater the likelihood of noticeable shedding.

Why Nutrition Plays Such a Large Role

GLP-1 drugs work partly by reducing appetite, which is the point for weight loss, but it also means many people are simply eating less overall. Hair follicles are metabolically demanding and among the first tissues to lose priority when the body isn't getting enough protein, iron, or key vitamins.

Jill Greer, RD

"This stress can disrupt the normal hair growth cycle, and reduced food intake can result in nutrient deficiencies that are important for maintaining healthy hair."

This is a useful piece of the puzzle, because it points to something people can actually act on. Eating enough protein, keeping iron levels in check, and supporting the scalp directly can meaningfully reduce how noticeable the shedding phase is, even while the underlying weight loss continues.

This is where a scalp-focused shampoo has a genuine role to play, and it's part of why we built HUSSSH the way we did. Hair Recovery Shampoo delivers iron and coenzyme Q10 directly to the follicle rather than relying on diet alone to close the gap, alongside saw palmetto and rosemary oil to support a healthy scalp environment while your hair cycle resets.

The Timeline: What to Actually Expect

For most people, the pattern follows a predictable arc. Shedding typically begins two to three months after rapid weight loss starts, continues for three to six months, and then resolves on its own as the body adjusts. Full regrowth and improved thickness are usually visible within six to twelve months,

whether or not someone continues the medication. Researchers have found no evidence that GLP-1 drugs cause permanent damage to hair follicles.

There is one exception worth knowing about. If you already have an underlying pattern of hair thinning, such as genetic (androgenic) hair loss, there's some evidence that rapid weight loss can accelerate its progression rather than simply causing temporary shedding. If your hair loss doesn't seem to be easing up after six months, or it's concentrated in a specific pattern rather than spread across the whole scalp, it's worth having a dermatologist take a look.

What Actually Helps While You Wait It Out

A few things make a measurable difference during the shedding window:

- Protein and iron intake. Aim for consistent protein at each meal and keep an eye on iron-rich foods, since both are directly tied to hair growth capacity.
- Direct scalp and follicle support. This is where a targeted shampoo earns its place, delivering nutrients like iron and CoQ10 straight to the scalp rather than waiting for diet alone to catch up.
- Time and consistency. Because hair cycles move slowly, most people don't see a meaningful difference for six to twelve weeks, regardless of what they change. Sticking with a routine matters more than any single ingredient.

The Bottom Line

Hair thinning on Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro, or Zepbound is a real and well-documented pattern, but it's driven by the speed and scale of weight loss rather than the medication itself, and for the large majority of people it's temporary. Supporting your follicles with proper nutrition and targeted scalp care during this window can make a real difference in how much shedding you notice and how quickly your hair bounces back.

That's exactly the gap HUSSSH Hair Recovery Shampoo was built to close. It's formulated with saw palmetto, rosemary oil, iron, and coenzyme Q10, ingredients chosen specifically to support a follicle under nutritional strain, without sulphates, prescriptions, or the side effects that come with drugs like finasteride or minoxidil.

If you're on a GLP-1 medication and starting to notice more shedding than usual, now is the time to start supporting your hair, not after the shedding has already peaked.

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