

Hey there, beautiful! 🌸 Before you dive in, a quick heads-up: this transcript is a super close-to-verbatim buddy from our podcast, but it's got its quirks! We didn't call the grammar cops on it, so you might bump into a typo or two. But hey, that just adds character, right? 😊 Embrace the wild side of language and enjoy the read! Happy exploring! 🚀



Can You Regrow Hair After Menopause? Find Out

Carmen Hecox: In [“My Post Menopausal HRT Journey, Did My Symptoms Go Away?”](#) I talked about how getting too much testosterone caused my hair to fall off at a rapid pace. I feel like I need to provide additional information about my hair loss journey and tell you what I'm going to do now to mitigate and hopefully regrow my hair.

The treatment plan I've planned out for myself is based upon my own research from what I'm experiencing and based on my lab work. My hope is that my treatment plan works and gives me my old hair back, or at best stops my hair from shedding as much as it is right now.

Initial Hair Loss and Early Treatments

Carmen Hecox: So, let me go back right around March of 2021 is when I first noticed that my hair was not as full as it used to be. Since my old hairstylist had fried my hair, I mean really fried it, it was breaking off, a horrible mess. Back in January of 2020, I figured that my hair had not quite recovered, and I had a lot of breakage. And so back then, my plan was I would stop flat ironing my hair. I used to wear my hair straight all the time. And that's when I began to start curling my hair or wear my hair in its more natural state in a way to help my hair look a little bit more fuller.

Understanding Hair Growth Phases

Carmen Hecox: Before I go into anything, let me talk about the four stages of hair growth.

There is the **anagen phase**. This is the phase where your hair is growing. It grows about one to one and a half centimeters per month.

Then there's the **catagen phase**. This is a regression phase. Which lasts about two to four weeks. The hair follicle begins to shrink, and hair growth begins to slow down.

Then there's the **telogen phase**, which is the resting phase. This phase can last about two to four months, and the hair starts to slowly shed.

Then there's the **exogen phase**. This is considered the shedding phase. This lasts about two to five months during which new hairs are growing in the follicles and replacing the old ones. Normally you shed about 50 to a hundred strands of hair daily.

I know it seems like a lot, but they say this is normal. At any given time, about 90 percent of our scalp are in the anagen phase, while 10 percent are in the catagen or telogen phase. Sounds good, doesn't it?

Impact of COVID and Nutrafol Experience

Carmen Hecox: So, on August 18th, 2023, I got COVID. In about three months after recovering from COVID, I noticed my hair started shedding more than normal.

I waited for this shedding to slow down. It didn't. And so, I decided on March 9th of 2024, I decided to start taking Nutrafol Women's Balance 45+. Within two months of taking Nutrafol, I noticed new hair growth along my temples, sideburn area, and along the area where I part my hair, I could see these little, tiny spikes.

Here's something funny is that I also noticed that the hair that was coming in was coming in dark. And I'd say that's kind of funny because I grayed prematurely. At the age of 21, my hair began to gray. And so, when new hair normally grows for me, it's usually gray or silver or white. So, this was quite interesting to me that Nutrafol was actually creating new hair growth. And my new hair growth was dark

in color. The other thing that I noticed while taking Nutrafol is that my hair was shedding less. I'd look at the brush, look at the shower there was very little hair that was in the drain or in my brush. This was very promising. In fact, my hairdresser, when she was doing my hair, she noticed the new hair growth and asked me what was I doing? That's when I shared with her that I began to take Nutrafol. So, I will say Nutrafol did work.

But then around May 6, 2024, I was in the shower and when I finished taking a shower, I looked down at the drain and I noticed this big clump of hair at the bottom of the drain. This scared me because I was not shedding hair anymore. Everything was perfect. I was doing my happy dance, and I couldn't understand why I had this big clump of hair on the bottom of the drain. I was about to call the company, try to figure out, and I thought, you know what? I got some bad news about a family member, and I thought that perhaps the bad news triggered some type of stressful event causing this hair to fall.

Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy

Carmen Hecox: Then on May 29th, 2024, that was the date that I got my first bioidentical hormone replacement therapy. Prior to getting the therapy, the doctor that I chose to work with, I did explain to her that my little sister had been on bioidentical treatment and that I noticed that she had lost a lot of her hair and I didn't want to end up like my sister. And from the research that I had done, I have found that a high level of testosterone could lead to hair loss. So, the doctor did assure me that she would give me a lower dose of testosterone. I was pretty comfortable with that.

On June 14th of 2024, I met with my primary doctor because that's when I started to notice large hair shedding. I mean, this was big clumps, kind of like what I had seen before when I said that I had this stressful information that I received. And so, I asked him, could you just refer me to a dermatologist so that I could find out what is going on because it was under control and now it's happening again.

He said he was going to check my iron and my ferritin levels first. And then he also recommended that I take Nutrafol. I explained to him, I've been on Nutrafol for several months. It was working and now it's not. And the other thing I did mention to him is I said, hey, could it possibly be related to the bioidentical hormone replacement therapy I did? And he said, let's just wait. Let's see what your blood tests come back as. Never heard from him.

Exploring New Treatments and Setbacks

Carmen Hecox: On July 3rd, 2024, I watched a YouTube video in which a woman recommended using Pura d'ro Advanced Therapy Shampoo and Conditioner. She said it worked for her. I thought I'd give it a try. Tried both of them, used them religiously for about three weeks. What happened? My hair dried horribly, I couldn't brush my hair when it was wet or dry after using both of those products. I went to my hairdresser, and she asked me, what on earth did you do to your hair? It is horrible. It's dry. And to tell you the truth, when my hair was wet it was gummy when it was, dry it was hard. I mean, it felt like I had starch in my hair. My hairdresser did do a deep conditioning in order to try to make my hair more manageable, told me to discontinue using that product, told her I've already stopped using it. And as of today, you know, we're in October my hair is still dry from using that product for about three weeks.

On July 18th, 2024, I made another appointment to go talk to my doctor and discuss my excessive hair shedding.

Lab Results and Concerns

Carmen Hecox: And I asked him, what did my lab results show? Was there any irregularities that could explain why my hair is falling out? I told him that I feared that perhaps my shedding could be coming from high testosterone levels related to the bioidentical hormone replacement that I had done. I had other symptoms like hair coming out of my face. I was, my voice was changing, and I told him those were all symptoms that I could have high testosterone levels. And so, he ordered additional lab work.

On July 21st, my hair shedding became even worse. So, I'm panicking

Testosterone Levels and Medication

Carmen Hecox: On July 26 of 2024, my testosterone levels came back at 319 ng's. I had a phone appointment with my doctor. I was very upset, and I said, these are high levels for a female. These are high levels for a male.

And so, what he did is he recommended finasteride one milligram daily and minoxidil, which is the male formula. I took the finasteride for about two weeks, and I noticed every time I took it within 45 minutes to an hour, my throat felt very restricted as if though I had a knot in my throat. It was difficult to swallow or even drink water. A few days later, I discovered that the symptoms I was having was due to a severe allergic reaction.

Iron Levels and Hair Loss

Carmen Hecox: After searching, for answers, in September, I read an article about postmenopausal women and hair loss. The article stated that postmenopausal women should maintain ferritin levels within the high optimal range of 70 to 110 nanograms or NG.

My most recent ferritin results, which were taken on June 14th, came back within normal, but low normal of 27 nanograms. On September 17th, 2024, I began taking 65 milligrams of an iron supplement every morning on an empty stomach, typically with orange juice. My ferritin level is within the normal range, but not optimal. From what I've read, once my ferritin level reaches within the optimal range, it may take several months for my hair to regrow. The reason my doctor was not overly concerned about my ferritin levels is because, as stated, my results were within the normal range. Anything between 12 to 252 nanograms is considered normal. I will warn you, taking iron supplements on an empty stomach can be hard on your stomach, that is why I take it with orange juice and make sure I'm near a bathroom within two to three hours after taking it.

Exploring Treatments and Solutions

Carmen Hecox: I tried Costco's minoxidil formula, but also read that in order to get better results, a compound formula is the way to go. When using minoxidil, or the compound formula they do cause shedding initially, but from what I've read, the compound formula provides better results. And so, since I'm desperate here, I should expect to see a reduction in the hair shedding within three to six months and regrowth within six to 12 months. I started using a compound formula on October 20th, 2024. So, we'll see how that works.

I also read that using a helmet that provides low level light therapy increases blood flow to the hair follicles and reactivates those dormant hair follicles to grow back

thicker and healthier hair. Although using this device is not a quick fix, I should expect to see some results within four months.

New Doctor and Adjusted Treatment

Carmen Hecox: I did get another bioidentical hormone replacement therapy treatment on October 16th with a different doctor who has more experience than my prior doctor. He agreed that I was given too much testosterone and that my high testosterone levels have been known to promote DHT hormone that is linked to hair loss. My new doctor informed me that his practice has always been to give women lower doses of testosterone and then slowly increase based upon their six weeks lab results.

But since I personally requested that even a lower dosage than he would normally give due to my hair loss issue, he would honor my request. He also recommended that I take a high dosage of saw palmetto berries as most of his patients have seen results as quickly as two months. I began taking 540 milligrams of saw palmetto berries on October 17th, 2024.

Personal Health Journey and Reflections

Carmen Hecox: So, what's the moral of this discussion here? Before I go into that, I want to share, I've always had an issue with being anemic. When I was younger, had a cycle, it was horrible. I thought I had it under control by eating iron rich foods when I felt symptoms, like out of breath, tired, sluggish. But since I haven't had any of those symptoms for several years, I thought I was doing fine.

I have reviewed my ferritin levels which were taken 16 years ago, and those levels were 24 nanograms. So, it appears I've always had lower than normal levels.

I don't know if it's perhaps contracting COVID, getting an extremely high dose of testosterone, and the fact that I'm postmenopausal that may have been the tipping point that caused my hair to fall at a faster rate. So, the moral here is that sometimes our lab work could appear normal because they fall within the normal range. I know to most people, and maybe even my doctor, he might look at my hair and say, you have so much hair, don't worry about it. Or maybe because I'm postmenopausal and what I'm going through is normal. It's just another part of this journey that I need to become accustomed to.

But here's the thing, maybe it's not normal and every woman who has traveled this road before me shouldn't have lost their hair because there was a solution.

So as many of my guests who are medical doctors have said here on the show, our healthcare system has failed us women, especially women who are beyond childbearing years.

Taking Control of Health Care

Carmen Hecox: If we have a problem, we're not getting the answers from our medical providers. Then we need to go out and do the research and find those answers ourselves. And once we have those answers, I recommend you take those answers to your doctor. We need to take control of our own health care and become our own health care advocate. And if that doesn't work, maybe it's time to find a new doctor.

Final Thoughts and Future Plans

Carmen Hecox: So, I'm going to provide my honest feedback within three to four months. I'm not an affiliate with any of the products or devices that I'm going to be using. I purchased everything myself. I'm going to provide you with my honest opinion. In fact, when I placed my order for the hair topical solution that I'm using, I noticed that there was a person who provided a review who said that just using the product for five days and she is beginning to see results. That's bogus.

Remember I talked about the four hair growth phases? Well, you can't see those results within five days. That just doesn't line up.

So, I'm going to continue to use Nutrafol as I've been using for the past seven months. If you decide to use it yourself, here's my little recommendation order directly from the company and set up an autoship so you can avoid paying for shipping fees.

I'm going to continue to take 65 milligrams of iron, 540 milligrams of saw palmetto berries. The compound hair topical that I'm currently using on my hair. I'm also going to use the low-level light therapy helmet every other day. I began using the helmet on October 22nd.

And most importantly, I'm going to start washing my hair every other day instead of once or twice a week. I discovered that washing your hair once a week can clog your hair follicles, which leads to permanent hair loss because your follicles can die. Once the hair follicle is dead, I'm certainly not going to promote hair growth.

I will provide an update on my hair growth journey and a review on all the products I used within three to four months.

For additional information about today's episode or learn more about my hair loss journey, head on over to createthebestme.com/ep087.

Don't forget to join us next week as our guest will be Lynne Golodner, Lynne is an award-winning author, journalist, runs her own marketing and public relations, and a fellow podcaster. Lynne will share how women in midlife can find and amplify their voice through writing.

Thank you for watching. Catch you next week. Bye for now.