

## Alopecia areata

Alopecia areata is an auto immune disease where the immune system attacks the hair follicles, which leads to hair loss.

The appearance of bald spots in the body (scalp or elsewhere), up to the size of a coin, is the first sign of alopecia areata. The disease may be limited (in the head or beard), or may cause hair in eyebrows, eyelashes, mustache, and beard to fall, or it may affect the entire head and rarely the whole body.

Alopecia areata is not a serious disease, and usually those with the disease are in good health, but since the disease affects the external appearance of the affected people, it affects their psychological state significantly.



### **Factors that increase the chances of developing alopecia areata**

The family history of alopecia areata plays a role in increasing the risk of developing it.

Hypothyroidism.

Vitiligo.

Addison's disease.

A person has anemia (megaloblastic anemia).

Allergy, asthma or hay fever.

An imbalance in the level of zinc in the body

Person with type 1 diabetes

Severe anxiety and tension (such as grief over the loss of a loved one or work problems).

## Treatments for alopecia areata

### Topical treatments:

- They are different types of creams (cortisone of various concentrations in addition to alternatives to cortisone) that work as anti-inflammatory substances that contribute to reducing the level of the immune system in the treatment area.
  - Local injection using cortisone is rarely used when there are small areas.
  - Topical creams and solutions that stimulate hair growth.
- \*\* Garlic treatment on areas with alopecia areata is scientifically not well studied and may cause skin redness, itching, burning of the skin and severe eczema.

### Phototherapy:

The principle of phototherapy (PUVA) uses psoralen with a UVA-class light, and is used for people with large and wide areas of the scalp and different parts of the body.

It is a safe and effective treatment, especially for patients with widespread alopecia areata.

### Other treatments:

- **Cortisone pills.** Sometimes these treatments are given to patients. It is not recommended to take these pills except in special cases determined by the doctor, although they lead to the growth of hair, but new hair usually returns and falls out when you stop taking the pills.
- **Other oral medications.** They usually include medications that decrease or alter the body's immunity and should only be given in very few cases by a dermatologist and under constant supervision.
- **Biological treatments.** Tofacitinib, an oral medication commonly used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, has shown some capabilities as a treatment for diffuse alopecia areata.
- **Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) and Mesotherapy.** This technique, which contains many growth factors, can be used as an adjunct to other treatments in treating alopecia areata.