"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE EDITION
Today, cooler with abundant sun, high 52. **Tonight,** clouds moving in, low 40. **Tomorrow,** there will be clouds and sunshine during the day, high 62. Weather map is on Page 23.

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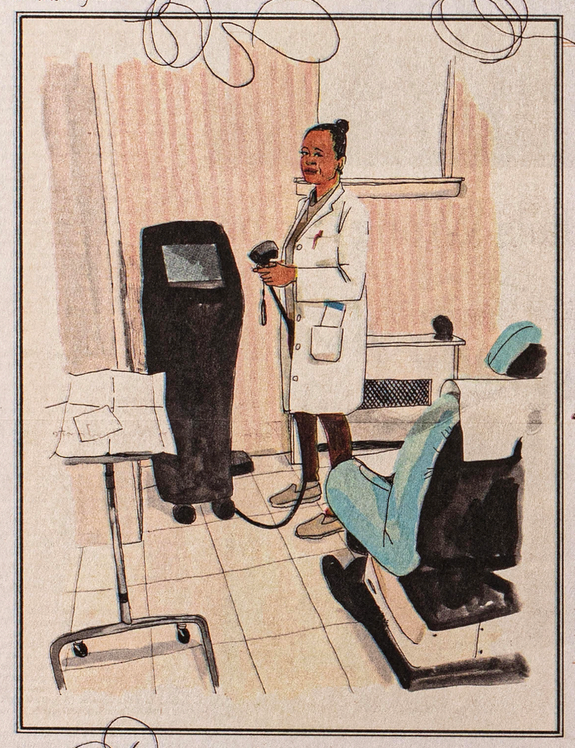
SCRATCH | JULIA ROTHMAN and SHAINA FEINBERG

THE LAST STRAND

HAIR LOSS is a deeply personal issue, but one that about 80 MILLION Americans deal with, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. The causes vary widely, and as a result, the number of products and treatments are ever expanding: By one estimate, the industry of hair-loss products is expected to be worth $5.4 BILLION in 2027, a 50 percent jump since 2020. With so many options available, HOW DO PEOPLE FIND WHAT WORKS FOR THEM and WHOM DO THEY TURN TO? We looked for answers in conversations with seven people around the country who've experienced hair loss, as well as three professionals who specialize in treating it.

The idea for this column came out of me, Julia (one of the reporters and the illustrator of this column), wanting to learn more about what to do about my own hair loss. I have been experiencing thinning for a few years, but recently it's become noticeable. I started using Rogaine, and we pitched this column to our editors.



THE DERMATOLOGIST

"When people come to me, they don't usually know why they have hair loss. So I have to diagnose it. People are starting to realize that everything isn't just 'TAKE ROGAINE AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING.' People have options now — Rogaine, steroids, injections, devices, P.R.P. (platelet rich plasma), where they draw your blood, spin it, extract the growth factors and then inject it into your scalp."

"*We are social animals, and hair is a signal for lots of things about us: our health, age, status. Hair is a big deal. So if you can get someone's hair to come back, they feel a lot better.*"

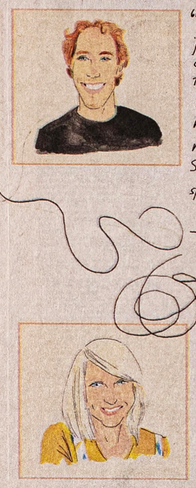
—DR. DINA STRACHAN, dermatologist, 55, New York City

"I take something called SPIRONOLACTONE. I take it in combination with NUTRAFOL, and I'm doing P.R.P. INJECTIONS in my scalp. It's painful and gross but it does seem to be helping. It's about $1,000 per treatment. I feel like I've tried all the things, and if I'm never going to have more hair than this, I have to accept that.

—HANNAH BERMAN, 42, artist, Oakland, Calif.

"The company KEEPS had a promo going on, so I decided to try FINASTERIDE. My hair has gotten thicker. Sometimes it comes up in conversation that I'm using hair pills, and people are surprised. They're like, 'YOUR HAIR LOOKS THICK AND GOOD!'"

—TENZIN TEHSHAR, 27, physician assistant, Brooklyn



"Last year I realized that I felt more comfortable when I was presenting feminine. And hair loss was the No. 1 thing that was stopping me. I had been avoiding the mirror for a long time, but the day I got my WIG I took the most selfies I've ever taken. I don't think I could have transitioned with the hair I have underneath."

—IKO S.M., 37, game developer, Oakland, Calif.

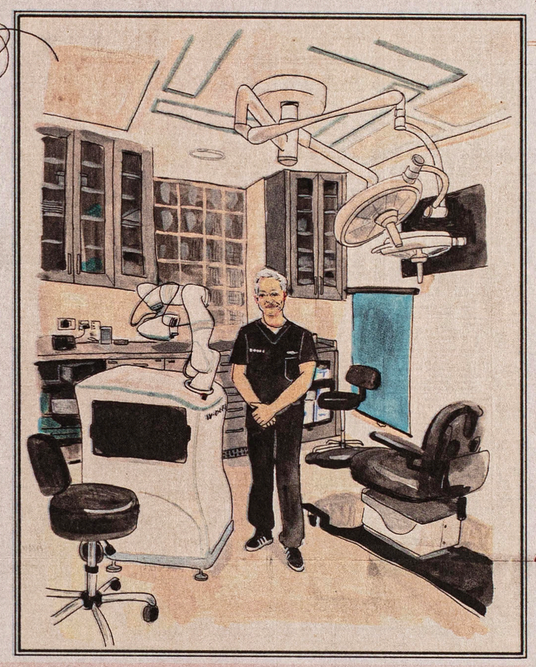
"I was talking to my dad one day on FaceTime — it was just a regular conversation, but a few days later he called me back and was like, 'HEY, MOM AND I TALKED AND WE WANT TO GET YOU HAIR TRANSPLANTS.' I didn't ask for them. I had thought I'd shave my head and that'd be my new look. If I was a monk, I would be bald. But I'm not a monk. So, here I am with hair transplants. My parents spent $10,800. I didn't ask them why they offered. You should!"

—EVAN ORLOFF, 32, baker, Burlington, Vt.

So we called Evan's mom...

"My hair is very important to me. I can't imagine for a guy — who is young and isn't in a relationship — what it must feel like to be balding. Evan is a wonderful person; the transplants just give him a little boost. (Now if you ladies could find him a nice Jewish girl...)"

—MARCI KRAFT-ORLOFF, 63, Evanston, Ill.



THE SURGEON

"There's two ways we do hair transplants. One is called F.U.T. (follicular unit transplant technique), which is where we remove a strip of scalp from the back of the head. And F.U.E. (follicular unit extraction), where we remove the grafts one by one."

"For F.U.E., I use a robot called the ARTAS iX. The robot extracts the grafts from the back of the head. That technology has really advanced over the past 10 years."

"The procedure is anywhere from six to 10 hours long. At six months we see benefits, but it takes a year to see the full growth."

"It depends on how much you're transplanting; the range is $8,000 to $16,000."

"*Years ago, hair transplants looked like doll's hair. They're doing a lot of research on hair cloning now. I believe in 10 to 15 years it will be a reality.*"

—DR. MICHAEL WOLFELD, 45, plastic surgeon, New York City

Talking to people about hair loss made me feel less alone. If they could do it, so could I. As I painted the art for this column, I imagined myself wearing a cool wig, and the panic I used to have was gone. Knowing I have possibilities feels good.

"I got diagnosed with C.C.C.A.* My dermatologist told me I could do injections, plasma or implants — it was all very costly. So I started using a scalp oil that I created. I added MINOXIDIL 13 weeks ago. Now my hair is healthy and longer. I started sharing my hair journey on YouTube. If I can help other people that's great."

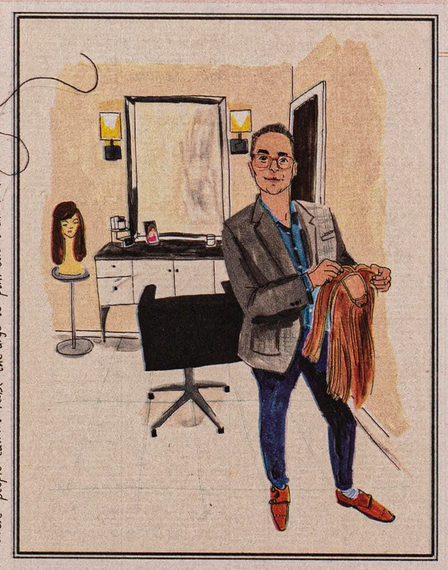
—JOYCE RHINE, 39, business consultant, Columbia, Md.

*central centrifugal cicatricial alopecia

"I started noticing these patches in my hair about five years ago. My Chinese acupuncturist recommended I take flowers and herbs that I could get at a pharmacy in Asia Town. Those dried herbs cost money!"

—MAL MATSON, 30, teacher, Houston

Normally, I'm really private about my hair thinning. I even cut my own hair so hairdressers won't see my hair loss. And I've told very few people about using Rogaine. But during some of these interviews, I felt comfortable comparing notes on the drug's side effects (like the light brown hair I started growing on my cheeks).

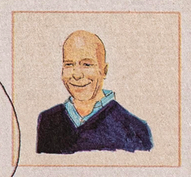


THE WIG MAKER

"My dad is a barber who specializes in hair loss and men's hairpieces. When I was 21, I went to hairdressing school and then worked with my dad. I took elements of what my dad did with men's hairpieces and incorporated it into the woman's world."

"I have a full-service salon now. We focus on thinning hair using WIGS, TOPPERS, HAIRPIECES, EXTENSIONS, PONYTAILS. Women come in for different reasons — autoimmune issues, hereditary issues, cancer, trichotillomania*. A lot of times people are so happy to come here because they've gone through everything else. I'm the last-solution guy. So when I'm able to help them, it's life changing."

"Extensions range from $2,400 to $6,000. Wigs range from $4,000 to $7,000. We only use premium hair here. The best of the best."



"I started to wear a TOUPEE in the mid-80s and stopped about three or four years ago. Mine was the kind you glued on. The intial purchase was two grand, but every visit was a few hundred dollars. It was a lot of money over 40 years. I was getting toward retirement and I was like, 'I CAN CUT OUT A BIG EXPENSE RIGHT HERE.' I got a lot of nice compliments when I took it off."

—PAUL ASARO, 71, retired C.F.O., Eastchester, N.Y.

"It's no longer taboo to talk about hair loss. People talk about getting Botox, butt lifts and boob jobs like it's nothing today. So why should this be any different?" —ANGELO DAVID PISACRETA, 56, hair stylist, New York City

* a condition where people cannot resist the urge to pull out their hair