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Age-related thinning (Senescent alopecia)

What is age related thinning?

- Age-related thinning refers to hair thinning that affects both men and women in their later decades, usually starting around age 50.
- The cause of age related thinning is not known. The condition is sometimes referred to as “senescent alopecia.”

What are the signs and symptoms of age-related thinning?

- Patients with age-related thinning typically notice significant changes in their hair around 60 (some sooner and some later). The thinning occurs all over the scalp and may be most marked over the top.
- The affected individual may or may not have developed genetic hair loss in his or her 20s, 30s or 40s. However, age related thinning is a different process.

How rapidly do patients lose hair?

- Hair loss is a slow process in age-related thinning

Are blood tests needed for age related thinning?

- There are no specific blood tests for this condition.
- As part of general evaluation for hair loss, Dr. Donovan may order iron studies, thyroid studies, and vitamin D

Is a biopsy needed?

- A biopsy is not usually necessary.
- If a biopsy was performed, it would appear very similar to genetic hair loss. The two conditions can not be easily distinguished under the microscope.

What treatments are available for age-related thinning?

- The main treatment for age-related thinning is topical minoxidil lotion or Rogaine foam. Other treatments have not been shown to have consistent benefit in age-related thinning but Dr. Donovan may consider a variety of treatments.

