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My receding hairline: A mum's story

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Hair loss is a common occurrence after giving birth

By Kitty Ricafort for Yahoo! Southeast Asia

Before giving birth to two beautiful daughters — an almost-three-year-old and an active ten-month-old — I had a great head of luxurious hair.

Wearing it almost down to the middle of my back since my high school years, I always prided myself on my easy-to-fix, naturally straight, dark brown hair. I rarely used a blow dryer and would simply comb my hair out after a shower. By the time it was dry, I would just toss it into place..

Losing it

I started noticing that I was losing hair three months after I gave birth to my first daughter, specifically in one area — my hairline. It was starting to look like the beginnings of the letter M as the corners above my forehead had less and less coverage.

I first blamed it on my constant wearing of tight headbands after the birth. It was easier to change diapers in dim light if I didn't have hair in the way, so I thought switching to wearing bangs would solve the problem, but much to my horror — the small letter M that was my hairline was becoming upper case even months later.

This is one of the things people don't brief you about when you get pregnant: warts/moles you already have become ten times bigger, tremendous night sweats will drench your pillow the first few days after you give birth, and for relatively "vain" mummies like me (this is a biggie), you lose your hair too.

After much frantic research, I finally breathed a sigh of relief when I found out that this hair loss, which happens the first few months after delivery, is temporary and that hair starts growing back between the 6th to 12th month after the birth. But, let me backtrack a bit.

Mumma Mane

For most mums, pregnancy usually gifts them with a healthy, shiny head of hair during the nine months of gestation since pregnancy hormones are surging through the bloodstream.

Because of this, mummy-to-be's system gets an extra dose of estrogen that delays the normal shedding hair cycle and stimulates new hair growth.

We normally shed around 100 strands a day. But during this time, instead of shedding the normal amount of strands humans usually shed within, let's say, nine months — the expectant mum's body holds onto the "older" strands longer while continuing to produce an increased number of new ones. Thus explaining the thick luxurious mane most preggy mums acquire.

Returning to normal

After the baby is born, the body then goes through another adjustment and works to "normalise" itself. Excess blood and liquid are gradually expelled along with the excess hormones, but with this normalisation, the new mum's body suddenly realises it's been keeping hair it doesn't need and starts getting rid of them all at the same time — which is nine months of accumulated "old" hair falling out of your head within a span of three months, mind you.

So, new mum, you may have to take out your hats and start practising a mini comb-over because it may take a few months to get your old coif back. But get it back, you will — so hope is on the horizon.

As your body reboots and starts to bring itself back to its non-baby functioning state (usually by baby's first birthday), it starts to replenish the sudden hair loss gradually over four to seven months and will work its way back into its old grow/shed cycle again.

True enough, fine "baby" hair started to grow in little by little at 8 months, so that by my baby's tenth month, my hairline had stopped saying "MMmm".

Granted, my hair's still not how it used to be. It's a little frizzier, there's slight thinness on top, and I've discovered six errant, white strands peeking through — but, hey, as any new mum will attest — no pain, no gain.

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