

Why Am I Losing My Hair Transcript, Part 1

[Jackie]: Hi this is Jackie Wicks from PEERtrainer.

[Jackie]: I'm here with Dr. Sarah Gottfried and many of you know she is a Harvard / MIT trained physician with 20 years of experience and she has seen so many patients, and she is also author of the forthcoming book, 'The Hormone Cure '. I am always so excited to have you here. Welcome, Dr. Sarah.

[Dr. Sarah]: Thank you, Jackie, and thank you to all of our listeners today. I'm so happy to be with you.

[Jackie]: Today's class is Hair Loss: Top eight reasons you're losing your hair and what you can do about it. Before we go into this, the class is part of our larger mission to really teach people the absolute unshakable connection between beauty and health.

We've had people write in about hair loss and instead of just patting you on your hand saying, "It is part of getting older, dear," Dr. Sarah is going to be teaching this class about what you can actually do... The How-To, essentially. The Gottfried Protocol for creating a good neighborhood for your hair...but most importantly how it relates to your good health.

We're going to be going over the top eight reasons why this is happening. And I do want to interject one of the most important things: even if you're not losing your hair you'll have the plan for what to do in the future.

After Dr. Sarah shared the statistics with me I was so grateful to have the plan and even as my mom was listening to Dr. Sarah talking about this during the Q&A we had in the hormone reset program my mom kept repeating over and over how lucky I was hearing this 23 years earlier than she did. We are primarily addressing women here.

[Jackie]: So we're going to divide the class into three parts:

Part One: the definition and eight reasons you are losing your hair.

Part Two: The Common Questions.

Part Three: Fix Me Now! How to fix this. The Gottfried Protocol, including the labs you're going to need, the nutritional, natural remedies, fitness, and finally the hormones. So, with that, Dr. Sarah, we're going to dive right in.

[Dr. Sarah]: Wow! Well, I'm so glad that you mentioned your mom Jackie because I think that what she's alluding to is the fact that so many of us don't realize how important things like having an approach to hair loss is until you start to stare with alarm at what's happening in the shower and what's happening to the drain in the shower and you see all of the hairs piling up and feeling like maybe the part in your hair is starting to change.

I really appreciate that your mom is tagging us and saying, "You know what? Get a really good baseline for where you are right now while you got all that hair on your head." We're going to talk about what that baseline is and how it changes once people start to have problems with hair loss and this is one of those problems that I see pretty much every day in my practice.

When I have someone who is saying to me that she's losing a fair amount of hair and she'll put her hand back and show me that her hair used to be this thick and she only needed to use her ponytail holder once or twice around her hair to hold it and now she has to wrap it around five times or six times. She's demonstrating the volume of change.

The way that I think of hair loss is that when you have partial or complete loss of hair, most of the time reversible (not permanent). There's even a definition new can use based on the number of hairs that you lose.

I'm not saying that I want you to start counting the number of hairs you lose each day but most experts believe that is normal each day to lose about 50 to 100 strands of hair. Most people don't pay attention to this until it feels like they're losing more. The idea here is that you're losing more than 100 hairs per day and you're noticing it.

Now, it could be with that ponytail holder that I mentioned, or you're noticing it in the shower or the bath. I often will have people concerned about this, take some photos of their hair, especially if they can part it down the middle. Take a picture of your hairline, along your temples, which is more where you lose hair due to androgens, and you can also take a picture of your part down the middle of your head.

[Dr. Sarah]: That's how I define hair loss, and I'll get into more detail about some of the situations that can be permanent, that the ones we're discussing today are the ones that fortunately you can do something about. They are also the most common reasons. 30% of women in the 30s notice a significant increase in hair loss; 50% of women 50+. So, it's a very common problem.

[Dr. Sarah]: The number one cause of hair loss before menopause is that you're low on iron, probably low on lysine. And after menopause the number one cause of hair loss is usually related to the balance of androgens with your other

hormones. So, it's important to check those things out. Low iron is the second most common reason for hair loss after menopause, so it still needs to be attended to.

And also I feel differently about hair loss than I do some of the other symptoms that women struggle with because I certainly noticed with my own hair loss that there's an attitude that, maybe you can tell me, Jackie, if you've heard this before; there's this attitude among physicians that it's a vanity issue and I totally disagree with that. This is a vanity and a sanity issue. It is something that is so important to women as we get older and want age gracefully; I really feel that having that hair on your head is so important.

And, I even wanted to mention some of the stories that we've heard in hormone reset because I feel like they really had to this point. They're such a spectrum here. There are people who are in their 20s and 30s who maybe don't struggle with hair loss or maybe you had a kid and you had that increase in hair loss after you delivered a baby, but then there are some people along that spectrum where they've really had a lot of hair loss and I just want to put it in their own words what it feels like.

[Dr. Sarah]: I really appreciated this one woman in particular who said, "I know I'm doing everything right. I'm doing everything that my doctors have suggested. I have taken on the food. I have taken on the exercise. I know that my health is getting better, and yet starting three months ago I've been struggling with this hair loss." And, she says that she's lost about 50% of the hair around the top of her head especially the temples.

She is struggling with a few other things including some difficulty with losing weight, trouble with sleeping through the night, her interest in sex, but she went to her doctor had her thyroid checked and was told it was okay. Her gynecologist checked her some of her hormones including something called FSH (follicle-stimulating hormones) and was told that she was normal.

And, here's where she really pierced my heart. She said, "I never knew how much it meant until I started losing my hair. PLEASE HELP"...all caps. "I'm not lazy. I'm not crazy. I'm not having problems with my relationship. I'm not depressed. I don't smoke. I don't drink coffee. I don't drink too much alcohol. I don't eat junk food. My life and my job are not stressful. I have "me time". I travel. I have hobbies. I'm doing everything right, and I'm losing my hair. What is wrong?"

I really appreciated how much this woman is asking for help because I know as well she does that you can go to your doctor and try to get help with this particular problem and it's often not what you want to hear. You get either get dismissed or you'll be given options that are not very palatable, like why don't you

start taking some Rogaine and smear every hair follicle with this chemical and it will help you lose less hair but once you stop it you'll lose all the same hair to catch up to where you were before. I don't think that's very palatable. I think that's totally lame

[Jackie]: No. And what I appreciate the most about what you do is that you're trying to get to the root causes, not just slap something on each strand and treating the symptoms.

[Dr. Sarah]: That is absolutely right. And that is my challenge to those who are listening today: to really, first of all start with the root cause of why you're losing the hair and then second of all were going to step into action with some of the natural therapies. I totally agree with that.

One other treatment that women often get offered is something called finasteride or propecia. That's the treatment that's been used on men. It's FDA approved on men but not women. It's a treatment that gets rid of every single testosterone molecule in your body. It gets rid of this really important hormone. A lot of people think of testosterone as being this male hormone. It turns out that women have a really decent supply of testosterone and if it's too high or too low, that can cause problems with hair loss.

It's yet another example of a treatment in the pharmaceutical industry that I don't think is appropriate. I don't think it's the right thing for women to get neutered in that way; to lose every single molecule of testosterone, which has a lot of other jobs. It helps with the sex drive and confidence. So, I'm really excited to be talking about some of the other ways that you can work with hair loss and get to the root cause and address that. To me it's much more intuitive. It's a much smarter way of moving forward.

[Jackie]: So, please, what I was so enamored with was when you're saying that the top eight reasons of why we're losing hair. We just want to really go right into those because I know everyone is thinking it's this and thinking it's that... It's almost busting the myths.

[Dr. Sarah]: Yes, and you know how I love to bust myths. The eight ways that people find themselves at this place of losing hair. What might be helpful is I'll just march through the headlines and if there are some that we want to come back to and give a little bit more detail that might be worthwhile and hopefully will have some other ways to share the eight different aspects with our listeners. But the first is iron and lysine.

Iron and lysine. And here's the cool thing about iron and lysine. It turns out that 90% of women who are low in iron and lysine link to hair loss. When I'm looking at the research on hair loss I'm really interested in figuring out, okay, what are the

food, lifestyle, medication, and supplement approaches that we can look at? There was a study showing that 90% of women with thinning hair were deficient in iron and lysine. Lysine is an amino acid. It also helps to transport iron.

[Jackie]: To underscore what you said was the first combination, iron / lysine, is responsible for 90% or I guess almost 90% of the problems with hair loss. So, the chances are that that would be the first thing to address.

[Dr. Sarah]: Yes and this is one of those problems I see pretty much every day my practice. 90% resonates because the women I see with hair loss typically will have low iron. But checking your iron is very high on the list. Especially for those women who are still cycling. Or, even if you're freshly menopausal, like it's only been a few years since menopause, when you are having a period every month, you're actually losing a fair amount of iron. Some of us are able to keep up with it but I find that a lot of women are not.

There are many reasons for that. We certainly want to turn down the faucet; I don't want to just replace all the iron it you're losing if that's your problem. More, think about this from a root cause perspective. But I find that low iron, low lysine is a really common issue. I mentioned before that low iron low lysine are really common in women who have hair loss.

Now, this study from France looked at women who had either moderate or excessive hair loss. They found that about 59% of them have low iron stores. So, this is a really rigorous study. It's 5000 women from France. But let me break it down into women that are premenopausal versus women who are postmenopausal.

[Dr. Sarah]: When they looked at women who are premenopausal they found that 23% of those women were completely depleted in iron. Completely depleted. They had nothing left. And they defined that as a ferritin less than 15. Less than 15 mcg/L. They then found that 57% of those women who were premenopausal had low iron stores. And by that they mean the ferritin was between 15 and 40.

So, those aren't the general guidelines of dermatologists and experts about hair loss recommend as the numbers to watch out for. If you have a ferritin that is 40 or less, you're definitely in that camp of having a problem with your iron stores. One of the things they were able to say from the study is that, say you are a 40-year-old woman, and you have a normal ferritin which is defined as somewhere between 70 and 80, if you then have a 30 point drop in your ferritin and you go down to 40, that means you have a 28% increased chance of excessive hair loss.

So, that's a very common thing I see happening usually between the ages of 35 and 50; where they just suddenly have a drop in the ferritin and then have hair loss related to that. But, it's not just women before menopause. Let me give you a little bit of the data for women after menopause.

What they found in those women is that about 52% of them, 52% of all these women, it was just a broad selection of women, not chosen for hair loss... They found that 52% of those women after menopause had moderate or excessive hair loss. Among those, 23% had low iron stores. So that means that the ferritin was between 15 and 40 mcg/L and 5% were depleted.

So, overall after menopause, fewer of the women were low in iron, but it was still an issue. It was still an issue. What that means is that 28% of the women after menopause were low in iron where that number was much higher before menopause, in fact that number was 80%. So 80% before menopause and 28% after menopause related to low iron.

Number two then? Stress and cortisol?

[Jackie]: Yes, yes, stress. Bad boy hormone cortisol. And also, if you could just comment on huge dramatic events. I define her story where a spouse died and the mom would just wake up with really big clumps of hair, and how that might play into it.

[Dr. Sarah]: Yes, well you totally named it there. Traumatic events are a really important cause of hair loss. People respond to trauma in different ways. For some people they grieve, they move on, the emotional processing is really variable from person to person. But, there's definitely a subset of people who will have someone who they love die or they'll have some other tragic event, and the way that shows up for them is with significant hair loss and this is where cortisol is definitely playing a role.

So cortisol is that really important hormone that gets us out of trouble, when you're in a crisis like a car accident or something like that is the thing that helps you focus and fight and get yourself out of trouble. But, the trouble is our bodies are designed to be under that stress, dealing with a high level of cortisol, only a fraction of the time and yet most of us have a level of stress that's much higher than what were designed for. Most of it is psychological and emotional, not physical.

So getting to this person whose spouse died, what happens is cortisol tends to get pretty high in that situation as you're processing the grief and is very common for big chunks of hair to come out.

And, it might even be worthwhile for a moment here to back up and just give a definition for hair loss just so that were all on the same page about this is that all right Jackie?

[Jackie]: Yes, yes.

[Dr. Sarah]: So, the way I think about hair loss is that it's when you have partial or complete loss of hair. Most of the time, it's reversible, not permanent. Some people don't pay attention to this until it feels like they're losing more and the idea here is that you're losing more than 100 hairs per day and you're noticing it.

I often will have people when the concerned about this take some photos of the hair, especially if they can parted down the middle you can take a photo of your hairline along the temples which is more where you lose hair when it's due to androgens, and you can also take a picture of your part down the middle of your head. So, that's how I define hair loss and I'll get into a little bit more detail about some of the situations that can be permanent. But, the ones that were talking about right now are fortunately the ones you can do something about and they are also the most common reasons for hair loss.

So, the old other piece with cortisol, just finish up the second way that hair loss shows up... Cortisol is involved in some of your other hormones as well. For those of you who have done the hormone reset you know about this. I talk about Charlie's Angels in particular and how for women those three hormones you are working on your team and not against you are number one cortisol, and number two thyroid, and the number three estrogen. So, when your cortisol is either too high or too low it can affect how your thyroid and how your estrogen is working in your body so it can have effects on some of these other ways that women lose hair.

It's not quite as simple as you only have one cause (sometimes it's the case it may be your hair loss only is due to having low iron), but often I find that women have two or three causes and cortisol is often the reason for that.

So, that's number two. Number three is thyroid, and thyroid problems affect about 20% of the population. It's really common how often people struggle with their thyroid and many times don't know it. I'm a big fan of really taking on your thyroid even if you don't have any thyroid problems or you have been reassured by your physician that you're thyroid is just fine, I really encourage you to take this on. It's kind of like how Jackie's mom was suggesting.

If you manage your thyroid now and you take care of it is going to serve you so well and is going to help keep the hair on your head. I think this is a really important one.

The thing with thyroid said there are many different symptoms of low thyroid function. They range from weight gain to having very cold hands and feet to constipation, which I define as not having a bowel movement at least every day. It can also cause mood problems. We know that 20% of people with depression have an issue with the thyroid and one of the common symptoms would thyroid is working is that it can affect your hair and your skin.

The way it usually affects your hair and skin is that it causes hair loss but it can also affect the texture your hair. It can make you have a really brittle, straw-like hair, and it can also dry out your skin. The idea here is that you're thyroid is the engine behind your metabolism. If the engine is not working, it's good start to shut down the things that are less essential.

Even though some women may disagree with this, the way that your body prioritizes different functions in your body are to shut down the beautiful glistening soft hair and it will also make your skin less glowy and full of fluid. There's this dryness that happens and then sometimes the hair loss, and that's some of the back story; your thyroid is trying to figure out where to cut corners to be more efficient. Let's make the hair and the skin less beautiful. Let's not have to do all this work with creating new hairs and keeping the hair and follicle.

So that's number three. Number four is menopause.

As many of you know, menopause is that official one year mark when you had 365 days since her last menstrual period. The hormonal changes are pretty dramatic. The perimenopause for 2 to 10 years before menopause is a time where initially you have some estrogen dominance; you have more estrogen compared to progesterone, and the second phase is when you're low in estrogen. And then, when you're in menopause there's this interesting thing that happens where you have the low estrogen and how it is balanced with testosterone also changes.

So, what does that mean? What does it look like? Well, it does a couple of things. It can lead to hair loss and it can also make you grow hairs where you don't necessarily want them, like on your upper lip or on your chin or between your breasts. Those are some of the things we see with menopause. As I mentioned, this is especially related to your genetics. This is where heredity becomes very important.

Then, when it comes to nutrition, this is such a broad category but I just want to mention a couple things. One is I have an attitude about food: I am diet agnostic. It's not like I feel that one diet is right for everybody. I know better than that. I know after taking care of women for 20+ years that there are some food programs that work very well for women and others that don't. But, I know that the extremes tend not to be so good; they tend not to be sustainable.

I know that we probably have some people listening to us who are vegan or vegetarian or maybe we have some paleotypes who are listening to us and my main point here is that you want to think about how your food plan is serving you. How it's filling the nutritional gaps that you might have related to hair loss. Are you getting enough iron for instance?

Vegans, for instance, are notorious for being low in the B vitamins especially B12, but the idea here is you want to be really attentive to getting it from your food or from a supplement. I'm not saying you must become a meat eater as a way of dealing with low iron and the low B vitamins that can contribute to hair loss, but let's look at the data. The interesting part is that if you compare red meat to kale, it turns out that there's more iron per ounce in kale than there is in red meat. A lot of people don't realize that.

[Jackie]: I had no idea

[Dr. Sarah]: You have to eat a fair amount of it to extract it. And it's a different type of iron. You can definitely, regardless of what food plan you follow, there are ways to get some of these really important nutrients from your food as long as you're mindful because sometimes it's a message from the body when you start to lose hair that something needs to change. Like, you need to get more iron, you need to follow your ferritin for instance which we'll get to in a moment which is the most sensitive indicator of how much iron you have in your body.

So, that's what I mean by nutrition and there are so many different layers to it.

Well, the next one is autoimmune condition. This is one of the things that I don't see as often in my practice but it's one that I think we really need to pay attention to because I believe that one of the reasons why we see so many autoimmune problems right now is related to a combination of how we eat, how we move, how we think and manage stress, and also what was going on in our gut.

So, all of those things are of course interrelated but I honestly believe if that you are someone who really runs around with a really intense, hot amygdala for lack of a better word. That's what I'm when the call it, which is where you perceive threats in a lot of different places even if it's something relatively minor. I was joke about how making my kids school lunches are dealing with their carpools is a major stressor for me and if you're not managing those things well your gut is suffering.

If you then create a bad neighborhood in your body with what you're eating and not moving enough having a more sedentary lifestyle it sets you up for certain problems related to autoimmunity. Now that's not the only reason.

When it comes to hair loss and autoimmune conditions the thing that most people think of something called alopecia areata. The name isn't that important but it's basically in someone with hair loss would often will do a lab test called an ANA, anti-nuclear antibody test.

When someone has a positive ANA they often, when you ask them about it, they have symptoms of hair loss. They've increased shedding what they have thinning or they have changes in the color or texture their hair so it's a very important thing to consider struggling with your hair yourself, and it's not necessary something that your local doctor might think of first. Now, one person who's very famous for having had this is Princess Caroline of Monaco. She temporarily lost her hair due to alopecia areata. Alopecia is just a medical term for hair loss.

So, it shows up in a lot of different ways but often there's bald spots. There's a round or patch of bald spots when you have this particular problem. It's different from that diffuse hair loss all across your entire head that people have for instance when there'll low on iron or when they have a thyroid problem.

Another couple of autoimmune conditions that people have related to hair loss include Graves' disease, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, those are two different thyroid conditions that are autoimmune, Lupus this is another one that is maybe the second most common autoimmune disorder known to cause hair loss. The other name for this is SLE, systemic lupus erythematosus. Often will women have with lupus is they get a rash, they get a Myler rash that can affect the scalp and cause scarring. This can lead to either temporary or permanent hair loss.

You definitely want to check this out with your doctor and other things that are less well known include rheumatoid arthritis as a cause of hair loss. Also, fibromyalgia, or celiac disease. So there some other autoimmune diseases that can be went to hair loss. But let's go back to medications. I think we're just about to do number seven.

[Jackie]: Yes, number seven. Medications. One thing that people ask is can my birth control be the cause of my hair loss?

[Dr. Sarah]: Yes, oh my gosh. Don't even get me started about birth control pills because I've got many things that I want to say about that.

When it comes to medications here's the interesting thing. Many of you know that I have this radical great-grandmother who taught me that the answer to health is not found in the pill bottle and she was a very serious Yogini. She would arrive at her house, she lived in California and she'd arrive at her house in Maryland with suitcases filled with things like kale and meyer lemons and she would bake cookies out of honey, local honey. She just had a very different approach to health from the mainstream when I was a young kid.

Anyways, when it comes to medications turns out that many of them can cause hair loss and I think people don't realize how common this is. If you can bear with me for a moment I just want to mention a couple of different ways that medications cause hair loss. There are basically two of them.

The most common of them has a fancy science which is telogen effluvium and that means that you're losing more than 100 hairs per day. You're somewhere between 100 and hundred and 150. It usually starts between 2 to 4 months after you start taking a medication. It's just affecting hair follicles in the resting phase of their cell cycle which is called telogen phase.

The other type, the second type of ways that medications affect your hair loss is called anagen effluvium.

This is hair loss that occurs at the anagen phase of the hair cycle which is when it's actively growing and what it means is it's faster, so it happens more in the first few days to the first few weeks after you get exposed.

So the first type, the telogen type, is a much more common one and that for birth control pills fit in, its where antidepressants fit in I maybe just going to rattle off a few of common players: acne medications, especially the ones that contain vitamin E, the retinoids, antidepressants I mentioned, anticlotting medications, cholesterol lowering drugs, many people are on those, drugs that suppress the immune system, epilepsy drugs, medications for high blood pressure, mood stabilizers, oral hormonal treatments and that includes birth control pills as well as some of the oral estrogen and could just run medications.. Things like add advil, ibuprofen, Parkinson's drugs, even thyroid medications.

Here's the part that's super painful: did you know that one of the most common treatments for low thyroid function which is called Synthroid, actually can cause hair loss? This is the bitter truth that you never want to hear because a lot of women will start on medication for hair loss related to their thyroid and they never get told that the medication to get started on can also cause hair loss. It's this double insult.

The other class that is important to mention is weight loss drugs. So, I mentioned this because, I'm not saying that you all need to stop all of these medications. These are some of the most common medications we have doctors prescribing these days but more that I'm hoping that you're hearing from us the main point that we look for the root cause of why you're struggling with your health issues, whether that's hair loss or having no sex drive or weight gain and we go there and work on the natural solutions rather than jumping to this long list of medications that can actually increase hair loss.

Another really common one that affects more the anagen phase of hair loss is chemotherapy medications and there certain ones that are really the most common are adriameisen, cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, there's a long list here and I'm not going to through all of them. But as you can imagine I'm sure all of you know someone who's got to chemotherapy where they lost all or most of the hair on their head and her eyebrows or eyelashes, so this is an example of how medications can do it.

[Jackie]: and, finally the androgens.

[Dr. Sarah]: finally the androgens... Such a downer talking about all these medications. I feel like I just want to just clear their relationship before I move onto androgens. Androgens are another one of the hormones. With all hormones who want to be in that really happy place of having your hormones not too high not to low. Totally true when it comes to the androgens.

So, that whole issue and family including DHE eight, testosterone, di-hydrotestosterone, we don't want them to be too high we don't want them to be too low. When they are too high the most common situation that we see is poly cystic ovarian syndrome where you have this funny grouping of symptoms like cysts on your ovaries and you have wrote hairs we don't want them like on your chin and you get loss of head hair.

Not everyone gets that but that's, that constellation you can see in the spectrum of symptoms that women have. And then when you're androgens too low, it can cause some issues with hair loss. This is less common, but I had a woman this morning who is 57 years old and she said to me, "I'm still exercising as hard as I've always exercised but I feel more flabby. I feel like my muscles just don't respond to the exercise and doing and by the way..." (Once the door was closed to my office) "my pubic hair is gone! I feel like I've lost hair in different parts of my body, my head hair as well but I'm really noticing it with my pubic hair."

So, that's something we commonly see with low androgens; especially low testosterone and then of course sometimes sex drive is affected as well. The more common picture is to see the high androgens and see that as a reason. In fact, in women we know that it's one of the more common reasons why people have hair loss; why women have hair loss. It tends to be more not pattern that I described before of the male pattern; near the temples.... That hairline right in the front; not diffuse like some of these other ways that women can lose hair.

[Jackie]: The next thing that you want to jump to is after I'm hearing all these eight reasons of why I'm losing hair I just want to go into the three things: first common question is this permanent, is this temporary, can I reverse it?

[Dr. Sarah]: Yes, this is the situation where most of the time you can reverse it. There are certainly some exceptions especially in the autoimmune situations but if it's related to these problems that were talking about, if it's because you're iron is low or because of her thyroid condition, most of the time we're able to reverse it and if we can't reverse it we can actually slow down the process dramatically or at least substantially.

So, I want women to have hope here. It's very rare for women to lose all of their hair and to not be able to get it back; for it to be permanent. It's extremely rare.

[Jackie]: So, it's different from men.

[Dr. Sarah]: It's different from men. There are certainly women who go through menopause and they haven't been taking care of themselves the way that they would've liked. They had many years with a lot of stress, maybe their thyroid has been borderline for years, maybe they've have been able to eat the foods that they want, they have a fondness for refined carbohydrates, and their mom didn't have much hair on her head after menopause. In that situation you can get to a place where it's very hard to reverse it. I really feel like the earlier you take this on, the better. You'll feel empowered, you're going to have a lot of choices and you could take a not so good situation a whole lot better.

[Jackie]: and, before we move to part three which is the protocol in the labs and how to fix this, just two other things: if you could just briefly comment about gray hair and also facial hair if that is something that is also possible to reverse.

[Dr. Sarah]: I'm going to simplify a bit here because these are kind of big topics, but when it comes to gray hair there are a few different issues here. It's funny, there's actually this whole movement and revolution is happening right now that I'm really excited about. I've seen some of this on the Huffington Post for instance in a few other places where women are saying, I'm gray and proud of it. I think there's fewer people that are using toxic dyes as a way to cover up the gray of the hair.

How gray you become is related to a number of different factors. It's certainly related to stress, it's related to your heredity and it's related to thyroid function. Those are the most common ones it's related to the amount of melanin that you have in your hair. It determines how much pigment.

When I see someone who's really young, when the hair changes I start to think about particular things including their thyroid and what happened with the parents for instance: did they go gray early? Like, before age 40? It seems that premature gray is actually a little bit different in men versus women. You always want to think about is there any sort of medical reasons why you are prematurely graying or getting more gray hairs.

Another thing that I sometimes see is there are women who get prematurely gray because they are low in vitamin B12. Those are the main medical things that I think about. I think about B12, your thyroid gland, and that also how you're managing stress.

Your other question about facial hair is an interesting one. The most common reason for increased facial hair is related to polycystic ovarian syndrome as I mentioned. The other situation after going through menopause or even in perimenopause, you can have the imbalance between your hormones especially estrogen and your testosterone. There are some ways that you can manage that but I think the main thing, especially with polycystic ovarian syndrome is that there are a lot of different treatments that you can use that are natural, that are available from your local health food store that really help with the correcting the underlying root cause as to why you have increased facial hair.

So, that's the good news when it comes to facial hair. I was taught when I went to medical school that if you have something called hirsutism, and that's where we have increased hair growth we don't want to like on your chin or upper lip (there's a whole system to track this) if you have hirsutism I was told to women they had to go on a birth control pill and maybe add another drug called spironolactone and, 'oh, why don't you start doing some electrolysis?' That's another situation where I just felt like what I was taught to do left me cold. It motivated me to look for the more natural ways of dealing with this and moving the needle for women. We want to slow down the process.

[Jackie]: I'm just grateful, because that's what the whole reasons we're doing this because people write in and said going to the doctor and I remember you told your stories that you went to the doctor and the prescription was Rogaine.