

## Stem Cells and Balding

In a new study, published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, a team led by George Cotsarelis, MD, chair of the Department of Dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, has found that stem cells play an unexpected role in explaining what happens in bald scalp. Stem cells are those cells in the body which have the potential of becoming any type of cell depending on certain outside influences. In the case of male pattern baldness, the researchers showed that although the number of stem cells in the scalp was constant, there appeared to be a problem with the influences that turned those cells into hair cells.

## Shampoos and Hair Loss Treatment

I am often asked if there are shampoos which can be used to treat hair loss and the simple answer is no. There are many shampoos on the market which claim to cure hair loss but there is a lack of scientific evidence to support those claims. In a well designed but small study, researchers showed an improvement in female pattern baldness with topically applied niacin. No other studies are available to support the claims made by niacin shampoos ([Draelos 2005](#)). For people with hair loss and dandruff, the use of dandruff fighting shampoos can slow hair loss and actually increase the time that hair spends in the growing phase of the hair cycle ([Piérard-Franchimont 2002](#)). Be careful of other snake oil claims as some of these shampoos can actually irritate the scalp and worsen hair loss.

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