

This is an informed consent that has been prepared to ensure that you understand hair transplant surgery, its intended benefits, risks and alternatives to treatment.

When men lose their hair and go bald, the majority do so because of the underlying condition of Androgenetic alopecia, it as it is commonly known, Male Pattern Baldness.

Women can develop a similar condition of pattern baldness which has the same underlying cause but it usually affects the top of the scalp, sparing the hairline and 'donor' area at the back of the scalp.

Women can also experience hair loss due to hormonal imbalance, stress, anaemia, low iron, thyroid hormone levels or from trauma. Generally such patients are not suitable for transplantation and are best treated by dealing with the underlying medical condition.

Hair transplantation is a minor surgical procedure by which permanent hair from regions of the scalp that normally never go bald, such as the sides and lower back of the head, is transferred or redistributed into areas of permanent hair loss or thinning. The procedure is performed under local anaesthetic and so patients are fully aware and can converse with the surgical team. The length of the procedure can vary depending on how many grafts are harvested however generally it takes around 5-7 hours.

The recipient bald or thinning area is carefully evaluated and marked. Using local anaesthesia, a section of scalp containing healthy hair is removed from the donor area, generally in a long narrow strip at the back of the head. This donor area is then closed with stitches. These stitches are dissolvable and the patient should be left with a fine pale scar that is easily covered by the patient's hair.

The next step is to remove the follicular unit grafts from the strip and they are then carefully prepared, trimmed and then placed in to the recipient sites made in the bald or thinning scalp. In most cases, grafts of various sizes are artistically placed in zones, in order to achieve the desired natural appearance. Most grafts are 'follicular units', tiny grafts of 1-4 hairs, which are cut using the microscope.

The tiny hair that is transplanted in the graft normally falls out within the first 3-4 weeks. The new hair will then grow from the hair root and will be noticeable by approximately 4 months. After this it will carry on growing as fast and as long as your normal hair, usually about 1cm a month. A final assessment of the success of the surgery cannot be made until at least 18 months when the grafts are fully grown.

Alternative forms of management consist of not proceeding with hair transplant surgery and considering the use of plasma rich platelet therapy or other non-surgical therapies such as medication or hair serums.

All associated after care instructions will be provided on a separate information sheet.

As with any surgical procedure it is important that you understand the potential risks and complications

Smoking and Hair transplantation

Smoking may negatively affect the results of your hair transplant and delay or interfere with the growth of your transplanted hair. This is because nicotine restricts the nutritional blood flow to the skin which is vital for hair growth, while carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide (chemicals in cigarettes)- have been proven to reduce the body's ability to heal after surgery. Therefore to give the hair grafts the best possible chance to grow, we strongly recommend that you reduce or preferably stop smoking for at least 6 months prior to surgery and for at least 4 months afterwards.

In the overwhelming majority of hair transplantation procedures there are no complications. However it is important that you are fully aware of all potential risks and complications prior to proceeding.

We have divided the risks into two categories so as to put the risks in to perspective, those categories are those that occur occasionally and those that occur rarely.

Scarring

Scars will result from surgery and I understand their intended location. Additional scarring can result from poor or decreased wound healing ability. Most scars are barely noticeable although full wound maturation can take up to 12 months. Poor scarring can be treated with the use of silicone sheeting.

Swelling

Bruising and swelling will result as a consequence of surgery which will settle within the first week of surgery. I understand that my eyes will be puffy and swollen for the first few days post surgery and this has been explained to me

Mild 'shocking' (shedding) of existing hair

When there is weak existing hair in the areas of the scalp that is transplanted, occasionally the transplant procedure can have this mild 'shock-like' effect on those hairs, causing them to drop out for up to 3 months after which they grow back. This effect, in general is noticed in about 1 in 50 patients and is usually not an issue. It is important however to realise that surgery does not stop further hair loss from non-transplanted hair.

Numbness

It is common for some portion of the top-rear area of the scalp to be partly numb for a few weeks after the surgery. It the gradually returns to normal during the next few months

Bleeding

A collection of blood around the site of surgery is called a haematoma. Haematoma formation in this type of surgery is extremely unlikely. If a haematoma is large however it may be necessary to undo some of the stitches and wash out the blood clot in order to optimise the final outcome. As post operative bleeding can delay normal healing and recovery. I understand that every effort is taken to minimise bleeding during surgery.

Infection

Any surgical procedure involves a risk of infection and this has been explained to me. Infection following surgery is uncommon however it is important to follow all postoperative wound care instructions to prevent infection occurring. I understand that all measures will be taken to minimise this risk and that I may require preventative oral antibiotics. I also understand that if an infection was more serious then it may require transfer to a hospital in order to receive intravenous antibiotics

Wound Breakdown

Occasionally wounds as a result of surgery can be slow to heal or breakdown as a result of infection, poor nutrition or poor blood supply. It is important that you tell your surgeon if you smoke or have any history of poor wound healing or scarring.

Irregular or uneven delayed hair growth

Most transplanted hairs are shed over a period of 2-8 weeks. Generally within 3-4 months new hair growth begins. This may occur at irregular rates with some hairs coarser, finer, darker, or lighter in colour, or different in textures that the characteristics of the original hair. In most instances, this eventually normalises. However it may take up to 18 months or more from the starting point before cosmetically satisfactory results are seen. Occasionally further adjustment surgery is necessary if under or over correction has occurred. Every effort is made to ensure that under or over correction does not occur however this cannot be guaranteed.

Epidermoid cysts

These are small sterile cysts which occur when a new graft has been accidental placed 'piggy back' on top of a small amount of skin material which was trapped at the bottom of the new recipient hole. If they occur, they are simply treated with a tiny incision under local anaesthesia.

Additional risks identified to your individual case

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I confirm that I have read, understood and have taken time to consider all of the identified risks as described above, I have also had the opportunity to discuss any additional concerns and questions with my surgeon. I have decided to proceed with the Hair Transplant surgery with full knowledge of the risks and intended benefits involved. I certify that I have fully informed my surgeon correctly and to the best of my knowledge of my full medical history and status.

I understand that withholding medical information could lead to complications or problems that may have been prevented if that information were known prior to my surgery.

PRINT NAME (PATIENT)	SIGNED (PATIENT)
PRINT NAME (CLINICIAN)	SIGNED (CLINICIAN)
	DATE