



## **Fact Sheet**

### **Women and Hair Loss**

Few things change the appearance and self-image of women more than hair loss. Throughout history, it has played a defining role in femininity, beauty, sexuality, individuality and self-esteem. Its loss creates deep discomfort.

When a woman loses her hair it is a dramatic visual symbol of having a disease and often announces this fact to the world when it may not be otherwise visible. So, in addition to struggling with health issues, many of which also challenge a woman's sense of femaleness, hair loss is a daily and public stressor. It places significant emotional stress on women already coping with major issues.

According to a Roper Starch Worldwide, Inc. survey:

- 98% of oncologists consider non-medical aspects of cancer care to be very important or important to a patient's well-being
- 82% of female cancer patients experience physical changes during chemotherapy and radiation
- 67% experience emotional changes

According to a 1992 study in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology:

- the psychological impact of hair loss on women was more profound than for men
- women had a more negative body image and were less able to adapt to the loss

Cancers that are specific to or affect women in high numbers include breast, cervical, endometrial (uterine), ovarian, lung, skin, and colorectal cancers, as well as AIDS-associated cancers.

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