

BEAUTY

but it has become apparent that younger women are suffering, too. 'I've noticed an increase in the number of women with thinning hair under the age of 40. In the past month, about 50% of my clients have been in their 20s and early 30s,' says Kingsley. 'I always associated thinning hair with getting older, and never thought it would happen to me, but it did,' warns Olive. No wonder the hair-loss market is enjoying a 4.8% growth rate. So, what's causing the fallout?

FOR ROOT LIFT AND TEXTURE, hang your head upside down and tousle while you dry it

There's a chance you could be genetically predisposed to hair thinning (also known as female-pattern baldness, or androgenetic alopecia). This happens when hair follicles are programmed to convert the hormone testosterone into the more potent androgen dihydrotestosterone, inhibiting the growth of new hair cells. The first signs are usually a widening of the centre parting, before thinning mainly on the top and crown of the scalp. For now, this kind of hair loss is irreversible, as the follicle is damaged, but there is hope: new scientific breakthroughs include mesotherapy – tiny injections to help stimulate the functions of skin, and Botox to prevent the catagen (loss) phase and extend the anagen (growth) phase.

In most reactive cases, the follicle isn't damaged, so hair can grow back with a bit of help. The key is to catch the condition early by visiting a hair specialist who can address the root of the problem. 'Most of my clients suffer from stress, which is a very common trigger of excessive daily hair shedding and raising of androgen (male hormone) levels,' clarifies Kingsley. 'Our day-to-day life is overloaded now more than ever, which means our cortisol [stress] levels are often raised,' argues Guy Parsons, founder of My Hair Doctor. 'The problem is, hair loss normally occurs some three to four months after the trigger, so you don't know the harm you might be doing until later on.'

Simple things like using the wrong shampoo can also lead to hair loss. 'Unblocked follicles are key to hair growth, but heavier products that contain silicones can cause blockage,' says Parsons. This is why it's important to treat your scalp like an extension of your skin. 'A build-up of dead skin cells can surround the base of the follicle, inhibiting growth,' he continues. Kingsley agrees: 'Hair grows at its optimal rate when the scalp environment is clean and healthy, so if you aren't washing your hair often enough, chances are your scalp won't be in great shape.' Thankfully, there are new prod-

ucts that cater to the health of your scalp, such as Bumble and Bumble's Scalp Detox, £25, a pre-shampoo foam that uses salicylic acid and the same micellar properties found in make-up remover to break down product build-up. If you feel like your scalp needs a deep clean, try IGK's Low Key Cleansing Walnut Scalp Scrub, £31, which uses walnut shell powder to exfoliate, peppermint oil to stimulate follicles and rebalance the scalp's pH levels, plus apple cider vinegar to seal the hair's cuticle.

We should also be watching what we eat. 'Restricting your diet is bad for hair because it can mean you lack certain vitamins and minerals,' Kingsley says. 'With around 120,000 hairs growing on your scalp at any given time, it's important to feed your follicles the nutrients they need. Iron is one of the most prevalent mineral deficiencies, yet this is required for the growth phase,' adds pharmacist and co-founder of Victoria Health Shabir Daya. 'You also need biotin [a

member of the B-vitamin group] for the production of keratin and folic acid, which helps deliver magnesium, silica, zinc and more to the hair follicles and scalp.' He recommends eating high-quality protein such as chicken at least twice a week, increasing your intake of green vegetables to provide iron for the growth phase, adding whole grains to at least one meal a day for a dose of biotin and incorporating cucumbers, oats, rice and avocados, which are packed with silica to strengthen hair. Not sure you can fit all that in? Then try these (right).

"THE AGE at WHICH WOMEN are NOTICING THEIR HAIR THINNING HAS PUT HAIR LOSS in THE SPOTLIGHT"

AVOID SILICONE products, as they weigh the hair down – use a natural alternative

DON'T PART YOUR HAIR into a neat line – the messier the style, the fuller-looking the hair

DON'T SPRAY PRODUCT directly on to hair. Instead, work it in gently with a brush



From left: Aveda Invati Thickening Conditioner, £27. TOPPIK Hair Building Fibres, £19.95. Aveda Invati Exfoliating Shampoo, £25. NIOXIN Thickening Spray, £16.99. TIME BOMB Larger Than Life Shampoo, £17. JOHN FRIEDA Luxurious Volume 7 Day In-Shower Treatment, £9.99

HAIR FEELING THIN? ADD THESE HEROES to YOUR ROUTINE, STAT

WASH

Time Bomb Larger Than Life Shampoo, £17

Containing a unique peptide complex, this shampoo helps strengthen your hair right down at the bulb.

CONDITION

John Frieda Luxurious Volume 7 Day In-Shower Treatment, £9.99
Apply daily over the course of a week to thicken the individual fibres of your hair from the inside out.

TREAT

Nanogen Hair Growth Factor Treatment Serum, £29.95 at Look Fantastic
Massage into the scalp daily to regenerate hair follicles.

VOLUME

Nioxin Thickening Spray, £16.99
This spray-coats the hair with a film to make it appear twice as thick.

TEXTURE

Toppik Hair Building Fibers, £19.95
Miniature fibres literally grip on to fine hairs to pad out thinness. It's also available in nine shades.

STRENGTHEN

Aveda Invati, from £9
This cult range harnesses the power of naturally derived ingredients to reduce breakage and promote blood circulation – essential for a healthy scalp.