# Is Your Hair Going up in Smoke?

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Smokers face an increased risk of accelerating the aging process, indicated by facial wrinkles and premature gray hair as well as premature hair loss. Last year, researchers in Taiwan completed a study of 740 men, smokers and nonsmokers, suffering from premature hair loss. The findings of the study, published in the November 2007 issue of Archives of Dermatology, show that cigarette use plays an important role “in the development of moderate or severe” hair loss in cases where men smoked 20 or more cigarettes per day. There was evidence that “smoking may destroy hair follicles [and] interfere with the way blood and hormones are circulated in the scalp or increase production of estrogen.” Another theory is that smoking causes illnesses and diseases that impair the functioning of other body systems and further inhibit hair follicles’ ability to maintain a normal growth pattern. One conclusion of the study suggests that smoking causes severe illnesses and diseases that, in turn, accelerate the aging process, which, for many of us, results in hair loss.

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