

Jess..... I'm not sure that I'm fully ok with it yet, but everything that has happened has given me the backing to survive whatever happens next.



I'm Jess and I'm 21. I got my first small patch when I was 16. My hair loss has always been very slow, only losing bits at a time, so I didn't even realise it was happening until there was a large amount missing. I feel like my journey with alopecia to date is only half way through. My patches come and go, and I've always been able to hide them, but it's gradually getting worse now. I may have to start wearing wigs, which I'm not sure I'm ok with just yet, but I'm starting to think that would be better in the long run than being stuck in this state of limbo with my hair half there, half gone.

My family and partner have been really supportive and understanding throughout this whole experience, even though I know that it's been a huge struggle for them as well.



The biggest event in my journey so far was when my partner Adam out of the blue asked me if I would be ok with him putting on a fundraiser to raise money for the Australia Alopecia Areata Foundation. He put an immense amount of time and effort into organising the event 1000 Reps for Alopecia at his local gym, even getting members of AAAF to come down to support us. In the end he performed over 700 bench presses of 70kg and we raised over \$1000! The whole day was fantastic - I got to meet some other people with alopecia for the first time, to see how the community

can band together to support a cause and how far the people I care about are willing to go to support me.

This event also led me to tell my wider friendship network about my alopecia, which was completely nerve wracking, but was received in a far more positive way than I expected. With the way that society is focused on appearance, I thought that when people found out about my condition it would change the way they saw me, but it didn't. It's also made me realise how much the people in my life care about me.

Having alopecia was never going to be fun or something that I would wish for, and I'm not sure that I'm fully ok with it yet, but everything that has happened has given me the backing to survive whatever happens next.

www.aaaf.org.au