

Jozette.... In many ways, having to deal with alopecia has made Tess, and the whole family, more resilient, and appreciate what really matters in life.



My daughter Tess is 12 years old and has Alopecia Universalis. She was first diagnosed with alopecia at the age of six. As her hair began to fall out, while her diagnosis was devastating, it was not a total surprise to us. As her mother, I had also experienced alopecia when 16 years old. It was a very scary experience at the time, but luckily it was short lived. I was treated with steroid injections and my hair grew back quickly. My husband's aunt at the age of four lost all her hair but it all grew back one year later. Of course we were hoping that Tess' alopecia journey would end like ours and that her hair would grow back.

Between the ages of six and ten Tess had several bald patches most of the time but these were easily covered. She was treated with steroids on several occasions and her hair gradually grew back. Just after her 10th birthday though, her hair started falling out at a faster rate and in a different pattern. It was unstoppable with steroids this time. We also tried herbal medicine. Her eyelashes and eyebrows also began to disappear. Initially Tess wore bandanas and beanies to school, and we bought a wig. Tess was happy that she looked like any other girl in the school again. One time during sport however the wig was pushed off by a flying ball and her hair ended up on the ground. This was a very embarrassing experience and one that we wanted to avoid in the future.

In preparation for high school, we decided to get a suction wig from Angel Wigs. The experience with Angela has been very positive. Tess chose the colour and length of her hair. What else could a girl wish for? Angela was sensitive and perceptive to Tess' needs and displayed sincere kindness for the whole family. Tess has been very happy with the end result. She can play all sports, can go swimming, dancing and can style it in different ways. The hair looks very natural and new friends are surprised to know that she wears a wig.

Tess' outlook in life has always been very positive. She does not let things keep her down. Of course she would rather have hair (especially eyebrows and lashes) but she has learned to accept that alopecia is merely a stumble on her path to the future. It has not stopped her doing anything. Her friends at school know she wears a wig and she has explained to them what alopecia is. She does not hide the fact she has it, and her friends accept her for who she is. They love her smooth legs and are jealous that it is natural! Tess also thinks not having hair is quite convenient at times. In many ways, having to deal with alopecia has made Tess, and the whole family, more resilient, and appreciate what really matters in life.

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