

Sinead —

My name is Sinéad, I'm an Irish girl living in Australia .

I remember the day distinctively when I noticed my first patch. I was lying on the sofa at home trying to memorize my geography for an exam the following morning while messing with my hair while discovering that i had a coin sized bald patch. A few days later i was diagnosed with Alopecia Areata by my doctor. That was 11 years ago (I am now 26) and little did I know that that one patch was going to change my life.

Over the 11 years I have lost hair, grown again and fell out again until the beginning of this year it began to fall out excessively. I was left feeling unattractive while also angry, frustrated, sad, isolated, vulnerable, having knocked confidence while also questioning my own sense of selfworth. Why me? Nobody had told me the emotional or psychological pain it would cause, that feeling of anxiety coming through my chest when it was windy outside in the fear that someone would see my bald head.

What I have learnt in the past few months after really educating myself, from reading forums, blogs, focusing on my health and well being by building up the courage to get back into the gym, doing yoga, practising mindfulness and connecting with others with the same condition is that having Alopecia Areata is not the end of the world- it's not cancer related nor life threatening and that hair is a mere accessory and not a standard of beauty as social media can portray it as. Social media can be a negative place for people, where people feel they need to look or feel a certain way. However for me, by sharing with people about this unpredictable condition, it has shown me that I AM NOT ALONE It has helped me to speak openly about it to friends, colleagues, strangers while also connecting with people all over the world near and far.

There is no age too young or old to get Alopecia. Yes i wear a topper (gone from wearing wigs) and Yes I am aware that could lose all my hair any day. Am I scared, Absolutely!! But that is ok!

