

Teagan — Dear Alopecia Diary

Late June 2017

Is this really happening? Wads of hair falling out of my head. Every time I brush my hair there is masses of hair coming out. Mum is concerned and we're heading off to the doctors.



July 2017

Doctor confirms that I have alopecia areata. Go to see the specialist with Mum. He talks and types at his keyboard and doesn't make eye contact. I don't like him. His plan of attack is to put me on the highest dose of steroids, put me in a clinical trial and see what happens. I have done my research and I don't like the idea of putting all that "crap" in my body and suffering the ill side effects to maybe gain a bit of hair. I say, "no", he is surprised. I don't care. My health is more important to me than the way I look. I think I can handle the bald part, don't think I can handle the bald, fat and depressed. Decide to invest in a good wig instead.

August 2017

DDay has arrived. My hair is nearly completely gone and what is left looks terrible. I am going to shave it off. I have purchased 2 wigs, one human hair and one synthetic. The synthetic one is to wear specifically for playing netball. My hairdresser shaves off what is left. There are no tears. I have cried buckets of tears in the last few months that now I am ready and prepared for this. I am strong, Mum is strong (even though I know she has also cried her eyes out). She keeps me positive, commenting on how beautiful I look and I really have a good shaped head to be bald. Apparently, if anyone can pull off the bald look, I can.

September 2017

Eyebrows are virtually non-existent. I am hopeless at drawing them on each morning. I am going to get them cosmetically tattooed/micro bladed on. I meet Amanda, she is amazing. She is so pedantic when is "drawing" them on. They are awesome. So 'on point'. Love them. I think my mental health is appreciating it too. Starting to embrace this new look I have.

Teagan — It was the best thing I could have done.

October 2017

Coping ... learning to live with it ...new gained confidence
....getting there

November 2017

Schoolies, this should be interesting. Hit Queensland for Schoolies 2017. Worried a bit about what people will think especially at the beach if it is hot and I want to swim. Well, it was OK. There was a group of us at the beach and we wanted to go for a swim. I took off my wig, put it in my bag and put a baseball cap on. I knew people were looking. I hadn't hidden the fact I had alopecia but I hadn't had an outright conversation with many people either. It was the best thing I could have done. It opened the door for people not to be shy but to open and ask questions about my alopecia and how I was coping. It was really good to talk about it.



December 2017

Well, it's been a whirlwind 6 months. Lots of changes physically and mentally but I think I am getting on top of it. I am happy to be bald at home with my family and friends. I am happy to put my baseball cap and swim in public. Let's see what the next 6 months will hold...

January 2018

Great to go away with the family for our annual trip to Moama. Interesting to see the reactions of people who I see every year to my new "look". I think most of them think I have had chemo and lost my hair but are too scared to ask. My baseball cap is my new best friend – I have hardly worn my wig and it is simply too hot.

February 2018

Commenced my Diploma in Sport Development – very exciting. Also have changed my diet dramatically. I am now trying a gluten free and dairy free diet. I had been doing a bit of research and it is thought that dietary issues could be a factor in alopecians. So I took the plunge and thought I'd give it a go – what did I have to lose! (hehehe) I thought it would be hard but actually not too bad. There is really a great variety in the local supermarket and my family is really supportive and basically is doing it too.

March 2018

Well, after 1 month of my new diet I have a slight stubble on my head. Admittedly, a bit patchy and thin but there is clear growth. Not holding my breath fingers crossed.

Teagan — I felt like I had taken control. It felt good.

April 2018

Holidays Cruise to Vanuatu. Awesome. Challenge faced though when you don't look like your passport photo. I especially had a new passport photo taken (with my wig on) so it would look like me. As we were on a cruise and visiting islands, swimming and snorkelling -I didn't wear my wig off the boat when we were in port. I left it in the room for also the fear of losing it. The first time I came back on the boat the customs man did not believe it was me, I had to take off my cap and he still scrutinised me. I explained my condition and he eventually mumbled something and let me on. I was a bit shocked. The next time, Mum was with me. Same thing, but I stood my ground, but I still had to stand to the side while he waited and looked and compared photos to face etc. The next couple of times, I found my voice and basically walked through without stopping saying, "It is me, I know I don't look like my photo, I've been through it all before...do you have an issue?". I felt like I had taken control. It felt good.

May 2018

Gluten free, dairy free seems to be ticking my boxes. I have a very good hair coverage on my head and no more patches. It is approximately 1 inch long and very, very curly (again). I am amazed. My eyebrows are also growing (I even had to have a few stray ones waxed off...), but I will still have them tattooed as I love them and they are still quite thin and patchy. Mum thinks I can go out without wearing my wig. I don't think I can. It is still very short, and I am conscious I don't look like I used too. It also isn't styled (or able to be styled) at the moment but maybe soon.

June 2018

It's been a year since I first started losing my hair. I didn't think my introduction to adulthood would so dramatic. It has been a tough one. My hair is still growing (I think) but who knows how long for. I haven't got any other body hair so I am a bit confused – I am not arguing though. I am going to stick to my new diet and continue attending the gym. My "sport" wig literally fell apart from overuse. Not quite ready to face the world "wigless" at the moment, but watch this space.

