What is alopecia areata? 
Alopecia areata is an autoimmune skin disease that results in the loss of hair on the scalp and elsewhere. It usually starts with one or more small, round, smooth patches. It occurs in males and females of all ages, but most often occurs in childhood. One fifth people in the United States are affected by alopecia areata.

In alopecia areata, the affected hair follicles become very small and grow no hair, leaving a smooth or shiny bearing site can be affected alone or together with the scalp.

Some people develop only a few bare patches that regrow hair within a year. In others, extensive patchy loss occurs, and in a few, all scalp hair is lost. There are two types of alopecia areata are considered rare diseases. No matter which type it is, alopecia areata is not medically disabling; persons with alopecia areata are usually in excellent health.

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Does the Foundation have a newsletter? The Foundation’s print newsletter is published four times a year, providing a forum for people with alopecia areata and their families to interact and receive the latest information on all aspects of the disease. It enables people with alopecia areata to speak out about the problems associated with the disease and how to deal with them. It contains news about research and treatments, personal stories, cosmetic tips, information on support groups, and a special child’s section called KIDNet. Any donation amount guarantees receipt of the print newsletter.

What online services does the Foundation provide? The Foundation has an Electronic Newsletter (E-News) called Beneath the Surface that is distributed monthly. The Foundation also has an active Message Board that provides a safe and nurturing environment for individuals with alopecia areata, as well as Family members, to find support and guidance. The NAFF website also lists upcoming events, calls to action, and breaking news. The best way to stay involved and informed is to register on the NAFF website at www.naaf.org, and to check the site frequently for updates. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

When is the Foundation’s annual International patient conference? Once a year, the Foundation organizes a weekend conference for people with alopecia areata and their families. Doctors, researchers, and exhibitors attend to present and hear the latest developments in research, treatment, support, and cosmetology. At the conference, people from all over the world find a new family of support to help them cope with alopecia areata in their daily lives. These conferences have grown over every year and have added impact to the Foundation’s work and public awareness of alopecia areata.

Does the Foundation have support groups? The Foundation sponsors volunteer support groups nationwide and internationally, as well as telephone support contacts. These groups offer people with alopecia areata a chance to share feelings, experiences, and solutions to coping with the disease. Each group has a leader who has alopecia areata or is closely associated with someone who does. Support groups further the Foundation’s goal of research, emotional support, and public awareness.

What other information and support does the Foundation provide? In addition to this brochure the Foundation has:

- a brochure for children
- a brochure for parents
- a brochure that deals with coping
- a free seven-minute DVD “Alopecia Areata: Why My Hair Falls Out” available to children who need a way to share their feelings about alopecia areata
- a guide for parents of children with alopecia areata
- a school packet for aid teachers and parents in dealing with alopecia areata
- a list of recommended reading materials
- a message board that provides a safe place for people to connect with others who understand
- the Alopecia Areata Marketplace (www.naaf.org/marketplace) to provide additional resources for hard to find products to help make living with alopecia areata easier
- hair loss insurance booklet to help with your submission of a claim or appeal
- detailed information on current research, current treatments, and medical information
- annual reports
- specific fact sheets and reprints on various topics

Why should I become involved with the Foundation? In numbers, there is more than safety; there is strength, comfort, help, friendship, and action. In numbers, too. The National Alopecia Areata Foundation brings together thousands with alopecia areata worldwide to provide support, spur research, and bring an end to this disease. If you have alopecia areata, the Foundation can help you, you can help the Foundation, and you can help yourself.

Help yourself by sharing. It may seem you are the only person in the world with alopecia areata, but you are not. Help yourself by sharing with others like you. You have no idea what a comfort such sharing can be. Talk and listen to people who understand; know you are not alone; face the sometimes-hostile world bolstered by the friendship of others who care. When you feel comfortable with yourself in dealing with this disease, continue to support others who need help coping with it.

Help yourself by giving. When you donate to the Foundation, your money is immediately put to work by encouraging and funding research to improve treatment and find a cure, and in communicating with others about alopecia areata. The important resources of those with alopecia areata and the Foundation have made tremendous positive contributions to the lives of people with alopecia areata. Help yourself today.