



You Are Not Alone Webinar Series

Wigs 101 for Alopecia Areata: Choosing, wearing and caring for your textured wig

(Aired: Jan. 21, 2026)

JUDY WILLIAMS: (00:00)

Welcome to the National Alopecia Areata Foundation's webinar, Wigs 101 for Alopecia areata, Choosing, Wearing, and Caring for Your Textured Wig. Joining us today are Diane Austin and Pamela Shattuck, and I am Judy Williams, Director, Community Support for NAAF.

And before we start the webinar, I'd like to cover a few housekeeping details. We have disabled chat for this webinar session, so please post questions for our speakers in the Q &A section. Please keep your questions general for the benefit of all audience members, and the webinar is being recorded. All registrants will receive a link to the recording via email. And finally, please share your feedback with us. At the conclusion of the webinar, a link to a short survey will pop up in your browser window.

Please complete the survey there. And we use your input to plan for future webinars. And we want to make note that the live captioning is available for this webinar. To turn on the captions, click the CC Show Captions button on the Zoom toolbar. Captions will appear automatically at the bottom of your screen.

This webinar is part of NAAF's You Are Not Alone Education and Empowerment webinar series. NAAF gratefully acknowledges the support provided for this webinar and series by our partners, Lilly, Pfizer, and Sun Pharma.

Before we get started, I would like to tell you a little bit about NAAF and our mission. The National Alopecia Areata Foundation is the leading advocacy organization for alopecia areata. NAAF's mission is to drive research, to find a cure and accessible treatments for alopecia areata, support those impacted and educate the public about the disease. NAAF's vision is an empowered community with the choice to embrace or live free of alopecia areata.

To learn more about NAAF support resources and research and advocacy activities, or to join us as an advocate or supporter, please visit our website at NAAF.org.

And we hear that it can be confusing to hear all the terms used to talk about alopecia areata, patchy, diffuse, ophiasis, totalis, universalis, mild, moderate, and severe. The NAAF team wants you to know that even though there are many words used, they all refer to one disease, the autoimmune disease, the autoimmune disease, alopecia areata. That's what we are here to talk about today. And now onto today's webinar.

Wigs 101 for Alopecia Areata, choosing, wearing, and caring for your textured wigs. We're really excited to welcome today's speakers, Diane Austin and Pamela Shaddock, co-founders of Coils to Locks. They bring both personal experience and professional expertise to the topic of textured wigs with a strong focus on representation, confidence, and access for people experiencing hair loss. Today, They'll walk us through the basics of choosing, wearing, and caring for textured wigs and share practical tips you can use right away. We're grateful to have them with us and I'll turn it over to Diane and Pamela to introduce themselves and get started.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (03:07)

I want to introduce myself. Thank you, Judy. First of all, we're really excited to be here. We are really appreciative of NAAF for this opportunity. I'm Pamela Shattuck. I am the co-founder and COO of Coils to Locks.

I am, before launching Coils to Locks, I have been a professional actress all my life. I also have worked at a number of nonprofits in the cancer care space, supporting patients and caregivers. And I am passionate about health equity and inclusive beauty. And on that, I'm gonna pass it on to Diane.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (03:42)

Thank you, Pamela. I'm Diane Austin. I don't think you mentioned that we're sisters, but we are sisters. sisters. I'm the older, smarter one. I'm happy to be here. Thank you all for taking time out to join us today. My background is in human resources. And it was during part of my career that I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I experienced chemotherapy, hair loss. I'm also living with CCCA. I'm not even going to try to pronounce that acronym. So, and it's partial for me, but that's part of the lived experience that Pamela and I sort of bring to the conversation. And this business was actually started just based on my frustration of not being able to find a textured wig in medical hair loss settings.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (04:31)

Let's get into what we're going to be covering today. And we are going to talk about everything from wig care, wig caps. Pamela's going to do some demonstrations for you, some show and tell really. Synthetic hair, human hair, just the different definitions. I know during my initial wig journey, when I was losing my hair, I was somewhat confused about some of the terminology. So we want to just make sure we arm you with as much information as possible.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (05:03)

Yes, and you will be getting these slides. We're going to pass these on to NAAF so that you guys can get the slides. so you'll get, because there will be some information that where there's a lot of text on definitions and things. So you'll be able to look some of those up because we're going to pick and choose certain things to really focus on. And then also, ~ we are grateful to have been asked to do a bigger presentation at the NAAF conference, annual conference in June. So we'll be there and we hope we'll see you.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (05:33)

I hope to see some of you there, for sure. One of the things we learned early on in our journey is the depth of and scope of hair loss among women. And when you really start to think about the fact that, whether rightly or wrongly, beauty and hair are intricately tied together. We live in a society where our beauty, part of our beauty is our hair. So when you're faced with hair loss, there's a journey that, you know, we are taking in terms of how we're thinking about that hair loss. But the statistics are staggering. Just almost 50 % of Black women in the U.S. alone are living with hair loss. And then just regardless of race or ethnicity, 35 million women, 35 million in the U.S. alone, that's 21% adult females, just adult females are living with hair loss. And then when you think about children who are living with hair loss and men, the numbers are staggering. And globally also, two to 300 million women alone just globally are living with hair loss. so hair is, again, because of that cultural significance and we learn from especially young girls from a very young age about how you know, our beauty is tied to our hair. It can have a significant impact when you've lost your hair and so for those individuals who are interested in wearing a wig. helps with our self-confidence and our feeling, you know that we're presenting our best self.

But part of the education that we want to impart just for a minute today is that if you have textured hair and you're looking for a wig in medical hair loss spaces, they're not easy to find at all. And there really needs to be a lot of work done. And that's part of what we do to look at this health equity issue because it is a health equity issue when you're dealing with medical hair loss in spaces and bringing inclusivity into those spaces. this is more, many of you may not know this, but I do want to in particular address the audience of possible clinicians or patient advocates and hospitals in the audience. It really is important to have representation when it comes to medical hair loss.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (08:07)

And it affects so many things too, Diane, because you're talking about, and you experienced this, losing the ability to use your health insurance if you have health insurance. You don't need health insurance to be able to get a wig at medical hair loss spaces. But if you have it and you're not finding what you need there, you're then having to pay out of pocket. So there's all of these aspects to why this is important to be able to find something that represents you, looks like you, gives you a sense of self.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (08:35)

For sure. So on that note, let's move into some definitions. And as I think Pamela mentioned, we won't be taking a deep dive in terms of all of these definitions, but we do want to point out a few for you. You may have heard the phrase cranial prosthesis, which is the medical term for a wig worn for or used for medical hair loss. Or a medical grade wig. I remember very early on in my journey just feeling confused by that because I was thinking, well, you know, isn't a wig a wig? There is no sort of universal or official definition of what a medical grade wig is, but some of the attributes of a medical grade wig include wigs that don't have combs and that have silicone strips that secure the wig in place of combs, material, wig cap material that is gentler on the scalp, those types of things. And maybe down the line, there'll be some type of official universal criteria for medical wigs, but those are some of the things to think about when you hear that term. We're going to talk about open wig caps and closed wig caps. have some examples of that for you and the various different types of caps. I do want to say in terms of textured wigs, and we often say highly textured wigs. Those are wigs that are tightly coiled, tightly curled, braided wigs, lock style wigs, just wigs that are not straight haired wigs. So when you hear us say textured or highly textured, that's what we're referencing.

And then you hear, I mean, it can be really overwhelming if you're taking a deep dive because there's like glueless with caps and caps wigs that require glue and pre cut lace and what does all of that mean.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (10:25)

We even still spend a lot of time at YouTube and Google University. So we encourage you to do the same.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (10:31)

I get talking to the experts as well. And we're going to actually take a little bit of a deeper dive on the types of wig caps and wigs that are most popular right now. So we're going to just move on to the, a little bit of ~ a show and tell, guess, visually.

An open cap wig is, if you see this section here, this is actually a partially open cap wig. When you see a wig cap that has, the hair is coming through, that's considered an open cap wig. Usually open cap wigs are open all the way through, or there could be some variation like this. As you can see here, this is called a closed cap wig. The texture and material may look different, but the...

You can see that this is a closed cap wig because you ~ can't see the hair sticking through. So when you hear or see those definitions, that's what an open wig cap versus a closed wig cap looks like. And then you have the monofilament wig cap, which in this picture, this is really a partially a partial monofilament wig cap because they do make monofilament wig caps that are full wig caps. And monofilament wig caps give you the opportunity to have parts, create parts where the monofilament area is. The hair is usually hand tied, not usually, it's always hand tied and pretty much in a monofilament cap.

So monofilament caps, wigs with monofilament caps that probably have hand tied hair tend to be more expensive.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (12:16)

Yeah, and it's helping to give that illusion of scalp and looks more natural.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (12:21)

Basically. And then to the right is an example of a lace top cap. This picture, we do apologize, isn't the best. So you see all these little holes, in reality, because we had to blow this picture up, but in reality, this section would look a lot more natural. But the lace top with a lace front allows for a natural scalp appearance, depending on the style. And then natural hair edges. 360 degree wig cap, which is becoming very popular. Really just as the name implies, there's a ~ lace natural hairline that goes around the circumference of the head so that it allows you to wear the wig in a bun, in a ponytail. It gives you some versatility to not just wear the wig hair down.

You can do both. This is an example of a wig topper, another ~ phrase that you may have heard if you're not familiar with. And I know there are people in the audience who are probably very familiar with the wig, but a wig topper just covers the crown area. So if you have thinning hair or hair loss just at the crown, you can ~ hopefully find a wig topper that you can

more easily blend in with your hair so that you're just wearing the topper on the crown of your head. But with wig toppers, you do need to have some hair because of usually there's combs involved. ~

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (14:00)

Yeah, who are, again, just looking to get some fullness in this crown area because they're thinning up here. think, you know, back in the day or now or whatever, toupees, I remember that, you know, growing up hearing about toupees and wearing toupees and that sort of thing. That's what toppers helped to do, cover that baldness on top.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (14:23)

For sure. So there are five really popular wig caps, so we wanted to touch on those. The trend over the last couple of years are for, first of all, wigs that are lace front wigs, so that you have a natural hairline. Lace front, lace top, it's sort of interchangeable, but...

These wigs will allow for a natural hairline. You can part the wig where the lace is so you can move the position of the hair in a way that looks very natural. Also gaining in popularity is

the glueless wig because a lot of the lace front wigs and lace top wigs have that natural looking hairline that's often hand tied.

And, but you know, there are reasons why people may not want to use glue to secure away.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (15:15)

Yeah, often the is, the glue used can be a lot. And so we discovered also that there are now some brands that are doing non-toxic glue, water soluble glue, because glue in the past has been very...messy, I guess, and has ingredients in it that are irritating people and that sort of thing. We don't necessarily advocate for glue, but then finding out about these non-toxic glues, if you're wearing a lace front, someone who wants that extra security, there are some options for non-toxic glue.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (15:53)

Now, monofilament caps, which we showed an example of as well and talked a little bit about, is also becoming more popular despite the price point oftentimes for monofilament wicks because of the hand-tied construction and what we mean by hand-tied because I don't know if we explained that but for wigs that have a hand-tie component to it means that someone is actually sewing in individual hairs into the wig instead of using a machine to make it look natural. So it's more time intensive and it gives a great natural look, but it makes it more expensive, which, you know, it just depends on your preference.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (16:38)

Yeah, and just in general, the more features that a wig has, the more expensive it's going to be.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (16:44)

We showed you an example of a 360 lace wig and again that's gaining in popularity right now as well and you can definitely understand why if you can change up your look and look natural doing it those wigs are popular for sure. And then the fifth most popular are the hand tied wigs and 100 % hand tied wigs. So those are often custom-made wigs. So if you have someone that is making a wig for you to your specifications, those wigs are more often

than not hand tied. So the person is individually sewing these hairs into the wig cap and that's why those wigs are much more expensive as well.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (17:30)

But again, you guys will get these slides. And so you'll be able to really look at the pros and cons and the best for on all of these different popular caps.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (17:38)

Absolutely.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (17:40)

So, okay, I'm gonna talk about this because, so we thought it was important to have a slide or to put in some information on ~ the Consumer Reports article that maybe a lot of black women and other women of color may know because braiding is popular in the culture with black women. Consumer Reports did an article on braiding hair and the toxicity of the braiding hair because of the chemicals that are used in this loose braiding hair. And some of that information in people's minds has also spilled over into full wigs just based on the word synthetic. So we wanted to point the article out if you weren't familiar and bring it to people's attention if you are because...there are things that you want to look out for. The report talks about this where these are the facts that you need to know to not get a toxic wig or use toxic hair because there are braiding companies out there or brands out there who do use non-toxic materials. So we want people to know that there are options. It's not just, braiding hair is toxic or synthetic hair is toxic. And so some of the things that you want to look for is that it's a, know, a premium synthetic fiber is that it's made with these premium Japanese fibers, that the hair is soft, it doesn't have a strong chemical odor, it's not shiny and plastic looking. These kinds of things let you know that it's a lower ~ quality wig that's possibly, you know, full of chemicals. and unfortunately cancer causing that they've discovered chemicals in them. And then, yeah, so if you follow those guidelines and, you know, lot of people are putting on information on their brands, are putting information on their websites that are letting you know that their wigs or their synthetic hair is third party verified and things like that for, you know, to be eco-friendly.

That's a word. So yeah, so we just wanted to point that out and let you know that that article is there. I would encourage people to go and read it and get the facts around it so that you know that synthetic hair can be and is safe depending on whether you're buying premium fibers, et cetera.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (19:58)

And the other reason we wanted to point this out is that we learned during our entrepreneurial journey that hospitals that have wig banks or wig boutiques and support women in terms of medical hair loss within those settings tend to prefer synthetic wigs. They tend to buy synthetic wigs. And what we've learned from a few people, hospitals that were willing to share, especially early on, we were asking so many questions. It's because there's this perception, particularly around chemotherapy hair loss, but other forms of medical hair loss that have been induced because of medicine prescriptions or maybe bariatric surgery, those types of processes and procedures that ~produce hair loss, that it's only temporary. so oftentimes they're looking for wigs that with price points, of course, that are high quality, but with price points that are more comfortable for someone who may only be using or wearing a wig for a short period of time. What we also learned is that there's really, that's not true of everyone's journey in terms of temporary or permanent hair loss, depending on what type of alopecia you have. But, so we just wanted to share a little bit about synthetic versus human hair, which is, you know, it's beautiful. Of course it's more expensive. And if that's the way people, you you have to buy the type of wig that you feel most comfortable with if you're in the market for a wig. But, I would just state that there are a lot of premium wigs that are ~ synthetic that you might want to consider as well.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (21:42)

Synthetic,

Yeah. OK. So we're getting closer to demos. We really are. So we just wanted to put these points up here around things you want to start to think about as a first time, require just ongoing and selecting a wig that are important to examine, to just have a good experience and get the right wig for yourself. And I want to preface this by saying too, that it's a process. Whether you're buying a wig for because you've lost some of your hair, all of your hair, or you're buying a wig even for fashion reasons, it's a process if you're doing it for the first time.

And so I would encourage people to be patient in that process. Maybe even get something that's close and familiar to what you're used to for a first wig.

When you get it home, put it on, walk around, don't judge right away like, it doesn't look good on me. You have to retrain your eye to get used to wearing something that you just haven't worn before because there are gonna be features in a wig that you just don't see in your own hair, which is hair density, for example. Wigs, even low density wigs are gonna have more hair than your natural hair actually has. And so that's gonna present differently.

You want to take your face shape into consideration. may have a, I I have an oval face. You may have a heart shape, a diamond square, whatever it is. Round face. Which means that wig that you see on the model of the mannequin on the website who has an oval face and you get it home and you have a square face, it's going to look different on you. It's going to hang different on you.

So taking all of these things into consideration, I'm going to do a live demo on how to fit and measure, get all the proper measurements that you need. We went through a lot of the wig cap features, how you're caring for your wig and storing your wig is so important to get the life out of, a long life out of your wig. The average synthetic wig may can last up to a year even two. have wigs that I've had for synthetic wigs that I've had for two years, even when I'm wearing them daily because of doing all of these things, human hair to care for them. So I don't know if there's anything else you want to add to this. And I think we can probably start to move on to.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (24:05)

No, I think the demo will be sure.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (24:08)

Ill start to bring out some things.

And just before we leave these slides, these are some things that we thought, some questions that we get and things that we thought you might want to think about. You may have questions on this and some other things. We will have an FAQ. So let me get to that demo so we can have time for questions.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (24:27)

planting the seed in terms of some things that fish are.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (24:32)

Yeah, so choosing an authentic WIC style. think we talked a little bit about that. We're going to do some more and I'm probably going to boot Diane off to the side. We're going to stop sharing. Oh, I'm going to stop sharing so you can see more clearly the demonstration that I'm doing. So are we stop sharing?

DIANNE AUSTIN: (24:54)

That would be yes. I was waiting for Judy to stop shooting.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (24:57)

No, you get to stop sharing. So this is a wig that I have on. This is one of our styles. And so I'm going to take this off so you can see, so I can demo you properly. I tend to wear a wig cap. There are so many different ways that you can secure a wig. And some people wear the wig cap and the wig grip.

But most wigs that you get are going to have some form of built-in mechanism. This wig, for example, we have the silicone grip that goes all the way around from temple to temple. And so, yes, and this is a closed wig cap. There's the silicone grip. And I feel, I wear these all the time, I feel so secure.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (25:29)

And that's a closed wig cap.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (25:40)

even when the wind blows, I'm good. But if you want extra security, you can do certain things. But I want to start first with how to measure, because I think that's one of the most important things that you want to do before considering a wig, because there are so many factors that are going to help you choose properly. So you want to get a measuring tape, a

flexible, loose kind, not those sort of metal retractable ones so that you can have that flexibility.

Most important, one of the most important measurements you want to get is the circumference. So I'm going to just start here, you know, right pretty much at my hairline. I'm going to go all the way around the circumference of my head. So make sure it's back here at the nape of your neck. I don't know if you can see that. Bring it all the way around to where you started. And that's going to be your measurement. For me, it is, Well, it says 20 and a half, but it's usually 21. So my finger was probably off because I've measured myself before. But that's what's going to be your measurement.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (26:36)

Pamela, I do want to point out that the average, about 90 % of people have an average size head, which is why oftentimes if you're buying wigs, particularly online, there may not be different sizes available. And so that's, if you're wondering why that is.

And then the wigs do tend to have like bands and things to adjust for for smaller heads. Yes, the things that more companies are doing and we're moving in that direction as well is wigs for larger heads and smaller.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (27:14)

Yeah, absolutely. You thanks for that. And the average head size is said to be 21.5 inches. The majority of people have that head size. Okay, so the second measurement you want to get is ear to ear. So you're going to come here and not at the top of your crown, just a little behind the crown of your head, back there to the other ear. And you're going to get that.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (27:19)

22.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (27:37)

measurement and you know you want to make sure the tape is snug you know you don't want it tight you know we're not trying to shrink our heads maybe you know Diane might want to but um I'm sorry I bad joke. And my read says 13 inches and then we want to do just the front at the hairline.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (27:48)

One of the big head crew.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (28:00)

And I want to say make a point about the hairline. So if you don't, if you've lost all your hair, you're not sure where your hairline is anymore, a good rule of thumb is to take four fingers, start at the top of your brow and where that fourth finger meets is usually where your hairline is going to be. That's a good judge. So I'm going to take this measurement and go from my hairline again, back to that nape of the neck and get that measurement. 13 seems to be my lucky number. So that's a hum that measurement. And then I want to do some bonus measurements. And I found these helpful because, again, what we talked about where every wig is going to look different or may look different when you get it home and you're disappointed simply because that model or that mannequin or whatever has different dimensions, right? Different shaped face. And so some great measurements to have will be to get the length of your face where you're just going from your hairline to your chin. You know, so if you have, you see this, I don't know, 18 inch wig that you like, and then you have a short, shorter face than I do, it's gonna, you know, make it longer. The same thing, get your measurement of your forehead, which will help you with bangs. Again, you have a shorter face, I have a longer face, the bangs are here on me and they're here on you.

And so then you might have to do these alterations to like, if you really like the style, if you have that room, can maybe have a stylish trim the bangs, trim some of it off. But if it's the opposite, you may be disappointed. But if you are armed with these measurements, whether you're going in person or even online, you can ask the brand online questions if the dimensions aren't already there. And then another one is the neck. that helps with length as well you may have a shorter neck all of those things. So I found you know those bonus measurements really helpful I was glad I happened on those. And then the next thing after measurement is is you know how do you want to secure your wig? Again I only I use a wig cap this is a bamboo wig cap the bamboo is breathable it's natural material yknow has a lot of elasticity and it's going to be more comfortable for someone who doesn't have hair that has just you know against your skin as opposed to a nylon wig cap that can be itchy. So I like those and you can do again the wig grip with or without a wig cap. I'm going to take I'm going to expose my cornrows and show you how you can just do it without. So you're gonna start just a little back from your hairline. This is a velour one. It's really soft. It has a Velcro and get it really snug and it's gonna be, it's gonna add extra security for that wig when I put it back on. know, yes, I have the silicone grip, but now this really feels snug. Like it's like not going anywhere. So there's that and these are really popular. I want to share, where's my Velcro? I can't find it.

Thank you, Diane. And then I want to share this silicone headband grip. This one is full all the way around. You can't separate it. But these people love these in the alopecia community because the silicone loves that skin. It grips even more so than with people who have hair. And it really just suctions and creates I don't know, vacuum is the right word, but it creates a suction such that it really just keeps everything in place. And so these are popular, silicone wig grip. And then you can get a combination. And this is a lace front one, so where it has the wig cap and the grip built in as one. And this particular one is for a lace front. I mean, you can wear it if you don't have a lace front, but it will work if you have a lace front middle part and then, you know, can get a natural hairline. So, and there's the Velcro, I put it on.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (32:00)

Yes, I just ordered a bunch of stuff off of Amazon. I even know the name of the brand actually. I was just like, I need that and I need that and I need that for my demo. And then it can be my Vanna and hand me one of the other wigs that the one that has the lace part. I think it's the braided one so people can see how that creates an illusion, especially if you just have skin there.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (32:25)

This is our future. ~

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (32:28)

Okay, so this is a braided wig that has the lace part. I think this is the side part and it also has the edge hair. Okay, I'm a lefty, so I'm having a bit of a dyslexic thing happening right now. Let me get this wig on it really feels secure. This one, I don't know what size this wig cap is, because I can feel that it's looser than some wig caps that I've worn before, but the wig grip is really making it feel snug. So I would definitely wear this with a wig grip. Let me get my little edge hair out there. I think I got it. And this is cute. This looks cute on me. So.

Yeah, I know if I do say so myself, right? And you do. I know and I did. feel like, you know, I just feel my scalp moving as opposed to like the wig moving. It's just like, yeah, so that's, that's really good. And that lace in the middle is helping to create that illusion.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (33:26)

Shameless plug, that's one of our up and.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (33:28)

This is one of our upcoming new styles. She's doing a shameless plug. yeah, your measurements are extremely important to get. then all the various ways you want to secure a wig. We talked about glue a little bit if you want that really extra security, especially if you're someone who's hyperactive and you're worried about your wig, if you want to wear a wig while you're jogging or working out that glue, non-toxic, might be helpful if you feel you want that extra, extra security. And then, yeah, did want to show, Vanna, can you bring me that dense wig? Because I did want to show, or bring them both, because the density is important too. This is an example of a really highly dense wig. It's very natural at the top.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (34:16)

and it's a lace front, it's got a nice natural part, then, I don't know if I can get this, I should probably put this one on, because I don't know how well you can see it. This one, we like to get wigs that have the precut lace, but this one isn't precut yet. But I already have on my wig cap that has the lacing in it which is still helping to have that natural part. You would cut that lace down. And so this is a high density wig. Looks natural here, but as it comes out, you have all this volume. It's a lot of hair. So if you're someone who's like, that's too much, you wanna consider that when you're shopping for a wig. There are some, if people wanna spend the time, we know people who have done it, well, they were like, I still like the style, so I'll just take it to my stylist and have her thin it out a little bit. That's a possibility. But this is a highly dense wig versus the braided one I had on, which is a lower density. And then the salt and pepper one that Vanna Diana is gonna bring me where I can show you a more medium dense wig. And.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (35:25)

And this one, again, I don't necessarily need a lace wig cap for this because when you have bangs, you know, there's no need for that to worry about that. But on a full wig cap with

bangs, but, ~ maybe I'll let myself go gray. I don't look too bad, right? But this is a medium. I don't know if I have this back far enough, but this is a medium.

And this is a perfect example. I have a fairly short forehead, right? So this has a lot of bangs and let's pull it back some more. And you may like bangs hanging in your face. Actually, I kind of do. And this is a medium dense wig. It's not as puffy, puffy, is puffy a word? It's not as puffy. And so there you have it, especially with textured hair, which is already coily and fluffy and that sort of thing.

You know, there are varying degrees of texture and density that we have and that we, you know, enjoy and that we may or may not want in a wig. So these are things to consider as well. Anything else to add, Diane?

DIANNE AUSTIN: (36:29)

I think you may have touched on this, but I think what's

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (36:31)

You want to come back on camera with me? I'm actually feeling this salt and pepper. I may leave this on for the rest of the.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (36:37)

Again, I think you touched on this, but sometimes it can be shocking and I think that's an appropriate word. When you put a wig on, you've seen a picture of it or you've seen someone else in it and then you put it on and you're like, I don't like it. It's because it, well, you might not like it, period. But oftentimes you're just not used to either the density or the length and those types of things. So sometimes you have to sit with it a little bit.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (37:04)

Yeah, that's a good way to close because it's so important that you understand that changes and adjustments and all of that are happening. And, you know, there are some people who will can choose a style and be like, I love it. It's wild. It's crazy. It's full. And I love it. I want that change. And then there are others, like I said earlier, where you want to just start with something that you're familiar with a look that you're familiar with. Get a picture

of yourself like I like myself at this stage. I'm going to get my first wig in this or a style that I aspire to. Get a picture of it, bring that with you while you're shopping either online or in person so that you can reference it and show them what you're looking for. And then give yourself time to sit with the wig when you get it home, put it on, look at yourself in the mirror off and on, wear it around and get used to it, the density, all of those things that we talked about.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (37:54)

I ultimately find a stylist if you're in love with the wig and you can't part with it. There are professional stylists that can help shape it to your face, can thin it out a little bit. I know when I went through my chemotherapy hair loss, the density of the wig that I chose, which I ended up buying a wig and a beauty supply, so I wasn't able to buy one in any of the medical settings. And it was much too...dense for me. It was like really, really thick. And so I brought it to a stylist and she thinned it out and it made it less dense. And then I, and she shaped it to my face and I loved it.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (38:28)

So on that note, I think we can stop sharing and, we stopped sharing. We can bring Judy back on camera and open it up to Q &A. Thank you everyone. Thank you.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (38:39)

Yes, thank you, Diane and Pamela. We can get started. have a lot of great questions. And so we'll get started. What is the process to obtain a cranial prosthesis?

DIANNE AUSTIN: (38:49)

So what you want to do first of all is to either find a hospital setting or a medical hair loss salon where they're selling these wigs specific to medical hair loss and also online because there are many places online as well. And that's the first step, just finding a source to find the wig. As I mentioned earlier, unfortunately, if you are looking for a highly textured wig, they are harder to find, but we're really trying to make a dent in that systemic issue. But what you need to be mindful of wherever you buy the wig, if you have health insurance coverage, you need to talk to your health insurance for the WIC. First of all, find out if you have health insurance coverage that covers the costs. Usually it's a reimbursement process for the WIC. And find out what their expectations are around reimbursement. So

oftentimes, not even oftentimes, you always will need a formal invoice. And that formal invoice, if you get it from a hospital, medical hair loss salon or online, has to have the words cranial prosthesis on that invoice. And oftentimes the health insurer will want some kind of diagnostic code that you would get from your doctor that confirms the type of hair loss that you have. And then you ask the vendor to create a formal invoice. Like, oftentimes people will ask us you know, they'll purchase a wig online and get the like online receipt. But if they need an invoice, then we create a formal invoice and hospital settings also do that type of thing. And then you can take that with you. But the first step is going to medical spaces and it could be even nonprofits. There are nonprofits that support individuals with hair loss.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (40:51)

Wow. And I would say, you know, something that you made me think of is important to when you're going to your health care provider, you want to always use, don't say I'm looking to see if you reimburse for wigs. Do not use the word wig. They will say no. You always want to use the medical term of cranial prosthesis with your health care provider.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (41:12)

Great, great feedback, thank you. Where can I find textured wigs, but in general, so can you give some tips on how to find high quality wigs?

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (41:24)

Yes, let's see. you know, obviously, you know, shameless plug again, we sell premium quality wigs at coils to locks. Synthetic. Synthetic, not human hair, synthetic. And it is a particularly going into the spaces and places that Diane mentioned, you know, is another good start from the perspective of if they know that you are really wanting these wigs, that's going to help bring the wigs into those spaces if they don't have enough textured wigs. Online, just search the words textured, coily, curly wigs, wigs for black women, wigs for people with textured hair, will start to bring up some options. And then you want to, from there, really examine what's going on with that brand and that website whether it's price point, whether it's the types of wigs, what we found on a number of sites who are saying they have textured wigs, they're really just kind of wavy or even straight. And even for another point you wanna look for is like, even if you are looking for a straight hair textured wig that it is labeled as kinky straight or textured straight because the quality is going to be

different than Eurocentric straight. But you really have to do your due diligence ~ when shopping online that you are shopping with a reputable brand that is not, I don't know, because I don't want to sound like I'm bashing people, but that is really sourcing from places that are represented, you can usually tell by the types of wigs that they have on their site. They're not plastic looking, they're not, you know, all of those things that we labeled earlier. And they have a natural look and that they have, you want to look for some of the things in any wig that you're buying. What's their refund policy? Do they have restocking fees? Do they? you know, can you return the wig if you don't like it? All of these things that aren't necessarily, that's one of the things that we wanted to support. It's just like, no, no restocking fees. No, if you don't like it, we have a 20 day return policy. Do they have that kind of policy where when you get it home, if you send it back, you know, undamaged, will you get a full refund?

DIANNE AUSTIN: (43:34)

And I do want to quickly add, because I'm sure there are other questions. If you're going to spaces looking for highly textured wigs, these medical spaces that are selling wigs and they don't have it, this is another area that you can be your own best advocate. ask them to stock highly textured wigs. Ask them questions around that.

Let them know that there's an interest in these wigs because what we've heard when we've explored going into certain hospitals is, well, we don't know that there's an interest or we don't know that there's a demand. We know there is, we know what the data is, but they have to hear from individuals looking for these wigs. have to...let the people in the retail spaces know you have to let hospital administration know. So that whole advocacy is important as well.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (44:33)

Great point, thank you. And I did want to mention ~ we do have on our website, our NAAF.org, information on insurance reimbursement ~ for cranial prosthesis. So make sure to go look at that and helpful tips. Another question would be with the topper, what happens with the back of your hair?

DIANNE AUSTIN: (44:50)

Okay, yeah. So a topper is really for individuals who only have thinning in the crown. So you have hair in the back and all of that. And so the topper is just used to help create fullness in

an area where you have less hair and then you blend it with your hair in the back. So the topper will, it's almost like the toupee, I guess is the best way to describe it. It's probably going to just...bit this crown section of your hair.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (45:20)

Yeah, and so, and I wanna add to that because yes, what happens to the rest of your hair? And that's what's challenging, I think, can be challenging anyway about toppers getting a perfect match, number one. If it's not being custom made, getting a perfect match or something close to. But then, you know, if the topper is curly, your hair is gonna have to be curly unless you're using the topper in a specific kind of style. But you're really trying to match the texture, you know, the curl pattern of your normal hair so that it blends relatively seamlessly with your natural hair.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (45:54)

Perfect, thank you. And I would love to hear non-toxic glue options.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (45:59)

Yes, good. There is a brand and it was just one brand. That's how I happened on it the other day. I was like, there are brands out there and I think it's called Fix It. (EDITED: IT STAYS) I've never used it, but I've seen a number of, watched a number of videos where people were raving about it. I believe it's called Fix It. It's a non-toxic water soluble loom for lace fronts.

Are you looking at up? Yes, and that's the only brand I know and I've heard but I've heard people repeatedly mention it and I'm pretty sure it's called fix it. So I couldn't be wrong, but I will look that up and get that information to Judy and the NAAF team because I think I bookmark that video.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (46:25)

Okay. ~

JUDY WILLIAMS: (46:43)

We can share that with the recording as well. So thank you. I have another question as I lose more hair I need some words of wisdom on how to wean my new wig look into my

everyday life Maybe some good one liners for people who may judge my new look I have found three wigs I like just need to cut get over the tentative tentativeness of wearing them Some rosé feel too hot sometimes they itch too. So please help me figure out a way to transition into wearing them

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (47:10)

Great question.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (47:11)

Yeah, I want to comment on the comment parts of someone you're transitioning into the wig and sort of managing comments about that, which can be tough. mean, that was my whole journey in terms of just trying to find a wig that looked like the hair that I was losing so that maybe no one would ask me any questions if I found something that looked like my hair. But I think the first thing is to think about the fact that you're not obligated, of course, to let anyone know what's going on with you and your hair. so saying something like, well, I'm trying a new look and then moving on is because you don't really owe anyone an explanation. But I think there was another part of that question, Judy, that I'm blanking on.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (47:59)

The second part of the question was in the summers, they feel too hot. Sometimes they itch too. So figuring out a way to transition into wearing them.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (48:09)

Yeah, I don't know what kinds of secure methods and different things that you're using. If they're not using a wig cap, maybe the material of the actual wig cap that the hair is sewn into is irritating and so maybe trying to have a barrier in between. That's the difference between if you do have hair and don't have hair that if you have hair, it's acting as a almost a natural grip even and ~ a barrier. But if you don't, maybe try the bamboo wig cap. That's supposed to be like soft and it's natural material. doesn't rub scratch according to what I'm hearing from people in the alopecia community. I have hair. So whether I'm wearing bamboo or synthetic, I normally don't get any itching. And then as for the summer, trying maybe some of the weight wig cap, lighter density so that it's not as heavy. It doesn't have,

you know, it's not too full up here. Shorter styles, if that's your thing, you may like longer looks, a lot of people do. But just the density of the amount of hair and the lightness of the wig cap which is where some of the more expensive caps come into play like a monofilament and things like that.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (49:22)

Lace could be less hot as well. And maybe even like an open wig cap, but with an open wig cap, if you remember, where you can see the hairs underneath. If you turn the wig cap inside out, you likely need some type of protective wig cap so that the hair isn't scratching.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (49:40)

That may be scratchy. Yeah. just having that barrier in between and because the bamboo back to the bamboo is breathable as opposed to a synthetic wig cap, maybe that would work. Gives your scalp is still breathing. And then you have the lightweight wig that may be easier.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (49:56)

Okay, and we had another question that was pretty similar to that and she mentioned that I've tried all the items you showed to secure wig, however, I have hot flashes. So I can't wear them with the wig and the wig is too hot at times. So what is the drawback to using a gel like got to be? Have you heard of this gel?

DIANNE AUSTIN: (50:15)

Well, don't think I've turned it on.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (50:17)

It's a gel like got the number two and B. (EDITED GOT2B)

DIANNE AUSTIN: (50:21)

I'm not familiar with.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (50:22)

I'm not familiar with that either. I'd be interested though, take a note, look that up. So, you know, maybe we can find some more information and answer.

JUDY WILLIAMS: And any tip on using a double sided wig tape, it's super sticky and they're having a difficult time putting it on. It says it's super sticky and I'm having difficulty putting it on my scalp from my finger.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (50:45)

Yeah, I mean, that's the again, I'm not someone that uses adhesives and glues, but in my research that has been an ongoing concern and challenge for a lot of people. You know, some people just take the time to just continue to practice with it until they get it right. But maybe and I don't know if this person wants to use the tape as opposed to like any type of glue, but I'm going to say maybe the non-toxic glue is more of an option.

And the tape, again, this is making me want to, I'm gonna do some of my own rehearsal, like real live, I'm gonna try tape and all that so that I can have better answers around that. But I really don't know what the remedy is.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (51:26)

Okay, and then another one is, can you swim in a pool while wearing a wig? We've got several questions on that topic.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (51:33)

Yeah.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (51:34)

if you're not risk-adverse, I would say, I, you know, I sort of say that jokingly, but we've been doing some research around, you know, ways to secure a wig for people who are actively involved in things like swimming and high level sports and there hasn't been anything that we have been able to find.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (52:01)

There is a process that is very expensive called, ~ it's called a suction wig and it's a brand out of the UK. And the whole wig cap is really made of silicone, I believe. And it grips the, it works well on people with no hair that is against your actual skin. And it sucks so securely.

that nothing is getting that off until you like, there's some sort of release method that you do to get it off. But from what I understand, people who are doing high level sports, who are swimming and that sort of thing, love them because they just don't move or come off. folia maybe. And I do have a document with that information on it. They're really expensive because they're custom-made. other people, I understand that there are people who use like the silicone grips and feel comfortable with it if they have a wig that has those elements that look natural and you know the wefting is not like in a basic wig cap and they have a natural look, they're comfortable swimming in it. It's usually, I would say eight times out of 10, it's gonna be a human hair wig because human hair wigs react like human hair. If it's humid, your hair is gonna fall. If it's wet, it's gonna fall naturally. So all of those things to take into consideration if you're gonna swim as opposed to a very dense wig. That's the other thing, a lighter density, a shorter wig that's really not going to like show or reveal that it's a wig where you can see the wig cap underneath are gonna be helpful things to be active to wear while you're being active, including swimming.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (53:48)

apologies. Some of our viewers did respond and said some are familiar with the gel got to be got to be it's a glue like a sticky spray and ~ several folks have said that it's great that it works well it works really well and it's great for wig wearers and regarding the double sided tape some people commented they use tweezers so thought I'd mention that as well.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (54:12)

And somebody also mentioned about swim caps. It's not a wig, but NAMU, N-A-M-M-U, swim caps are made for people with alopecia areata. So I can share that on my, we could probably provide that with the recording as well and we can share it on the chat.

But great questions. I know we're over time, but we have two more questions if you're OK with that that we'd like to ask. How do I find stylists that cut wigs? Is that a specialty? My experience has been that stylists who cut natural hair are afraid to cut a wig.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (54:44)

That hasn't been our experience really and it could just be where you live.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (54:49)

We have found stylists who have done it, but when I think about it, they have had experience with wigs. And I think it's really just more informal experience. But I think just asking around, asking like in this chat, maybe some people in areas that you may live in, have a no stylist, but I think it's more of a research and just asking questions if they have a comfort level.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (55:18)

Yeah, the same way because yeah, would mean I guess there I think maybe a point I'm assuming is that they're afraid they're going to mess up the way because I feel like if they can cut hair, they can cut the hair of a wig, but they don't want to damage or mess up the wig and then the you you don't like it and now they can't you know, you can't do anything. So that could be part of the problem. But then also, you know, you just Wanna like Diane said, do that research and find a reputable stylist in your area.

DIANNE AUSTIN: (55:47)

And this is why, like, and I'm gonna loop back to highly textured wigs in medical hair loss settings. Another reason why it's so important because in these hospitals, they have licensed cosmetologists, specialists who know how to trim and, know, thin out wigs. But if

you can't find a wig in those spaces, then, you know, you don't have access to that expertise.

But there are definitely cosmetologists that you don't even realize because you don't see someone sitting in their chair with a wig necessarily that have the expertise. are often times it's interest, hairstylists are often interested in the wig space so they may have experience and it's just a matter of asking.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (56:35)

And then there are organizations, there are nonprofit organizations that donate wigs and whatever and may provide those kinds of services. We can do a deeper dive on that. I know there's a place in the New York tri-state area, for example, I think it's Cancer Care that does that sort of thing. They buy wigs, they donate them to people, but they also have services where they can come in and choose a wig and get some support around styling and stuff.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (56:59)

Okay, great. as far as some other community members did mention, I don't know regarding the type of wig, but as far as being secure, we've had a few who said they have, they do swim in a headband wig, that it's very secure. That's worked. had another community member also say that they've been doing it for, they've had.

They've worn wigs for 35 years and they have used that ~ swimming in it and it's been, it's worked for them as well. So ~ she's worn it with tape and glue. I do have that other question is, which is really important one.

Do you have textured wigs for men?

DIANNE AUSTIN: (57:36)

That is a great question. We don't have textured wigs for men, but that is one of our goals over the next two years to carry textured wigs for both men and children. When we started this business, we bootstrapped the business. So we started with a very small selection, but as we're growing and as we understand the need, and there is a need, I mean, if you think

it's hard to find highly textured wigs for women, it's next to impossible to find these wigs for men and for children. So it's definitely on our radar.

JUDY WILLIAMS: (58:11)

Wonderful and I know I had said but this this last one I think it's been it's asked been asked multiple times so I would love to if you're okay with that just to wrap up it's what can I put under my wig or head wrap when you have absolutely no hair and you don't want it to look flat.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (58:28)

Yeah, there are.

And I can't think of the name of it. That's a good question, because it's making me think there was an accessory that I remember seeing in my travels months ago, where it does create volume. I'm going to look that up and find it and get that information to you all. But also, there are types of wigs where there's a technique called protease that they do. And so there's like an extra sort of bump, for lack of extra word, in the crown of the wig. And they add shortened, teased hairs in the crowned area that creates volume in this area mostly, but around this area. then whatever hair is going to fall, if it's long, and that sort of thing, or go out this way. So.

Protease is a technique that's used in those kinds of usually closed capped wigs. Could be an option, but there is something that you can wear underneath to add volume. I'm going to find. ~

JUDY WILLIAMS: (59:32)

Yes, well, thank you. ~

Great. of course, ~ besides all the great questions we got, we got many people thanking you for this great information that it's been very encouraging. A lot of them, you know, saying, you know, I'm going to go try this. I'm going to go try that. It's been amazing. So we truly appreciate it. Yes. You're seeing all the love. So thank you again for joining us. And this

will wrap up our amazing webinar and of course for those who want to continue the conversation or hear more from Diane and Pamela, they will be at our NAAF conference in Orlando this summer. So and we'll tell you a little bit more details in just a bit. So thank you again to Pamela and Diane for sharing your wig expertise with us and to our audience. Thank you for joining us this evening and also for sharing your tips as well.

And please share your feedback on today's webinar and help us plan future presentations. A link to a short survey will pop up in your browser window at the end of the webinar and your feedback is appreciated. And don't miss the opportunity to hear Diane and Pamela in person at NAP's 41st annual conference taking place June 25th to the 28th in Orlando. This conference is the largest gathering of the alopecia areata community in the world, and you're invited. It's a unique opportunity to hear directly from experts like Diane and Pamela, connect with leading specialists in alopecia areata, and meet others who share similar experiences. As a webinar attendee today, you're eligible for an exclusive 10 % discount on conference registration. So be sure to take advantage of this special offer and register today. We'd love to see you there. And we are excited to announce a new resource on the NAAF website. The confidence guide, wigs, brows, and more tools for managing alopecia areata. This comprehensive guide provides detailed information on wigs, toppers, makeup techniques, scalp care, and more. It is a great companion to tonight's webinar. We invite you to check it out. And join us for our next webinar, mild, moderate, and severe alopecia areata understanding severity and treatment choices.

Alopecia areata can appear in a range of severities from a single patch of hair loss to multiple patches to more extensive hair loss on the scalp and body. Dermatologists use disease severity as an important guide when determining the most appropriate treatment options. In this webinar, Dr. Brett King will explain what is considered mild, moderate, and severe alopecia areata and how treatment approaches may differ across these levels with a special focus on mild and moderate disease. He will review commonly used treatments, including steroids, minoxidil, and Jack inhibitors, and will discuss what is known about some older treatment approaches. This webinar will take place on Thursday, February 19th at 7 p.m. Eastern, 4 p.m. Pacific time. Registration is now open.

And we encourage you to stay in regular touch with NAAF. You use the QR code here to subscribe to our email list for regular updates on alopecia areata, news and research, the monthly NAAF electronic newsletter, and notices about upcoming webinars and other

programs. To learn more about NAAF and the resources we offer, please visit NAAF.org and email us at support at NAAF.org. This concludes today's webinar program. Thank you for joining us and we look forward to seeing you on the next webinar. Thank you, Diane and Pamela. Thank you, everyone.

PAMELA SHADDOCK: (1:03:06)

Thank you so much, everyone.

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