

LIFE live it well

It's the distressing health condition that's centre stage this week after sparking The Slap that shocked the Oscars.

Alopecia is no laughing matter to Hollywood star Will Smith - who blew a fuse when comedian Chris Rock made a bald joke directed at Will's wife Jada Pinkett Smith.

Jada suffers from the autoimmune disorder that causes hair loss and the actress shaves her head due to the condition.

Now the Irish alopecia community have talked to us about what life is like living with alopecia.

DUBLINER Yvonne Kinsella - who has suffered with it for three years - said Chris Rock's jibe was particularly hurtful as people with this hair loss fear being laughed at.

She explained a coping mechanism is to try and put a brave face on something that is beyond your control.

Yvonne, 50, said: "I know Jada came out and said she's fine with it."

"We all say we're fine with alopecia, 99.9% of us aren't fine with it, it's just that we have to deal with it and get on with it, which is what she was doing."

"I'm sure on Oscars day she felt devastated that she couldn't be in the hairdressers, like all the other glamorous women that were going that night, having a lovely hair shampoo, a little head massage, coming out looking fantastic."

Yvonne added: "But I don't condone what Will did - he could have handled it in a very different way."

"He let himself down further with his language, when the world was looking."

"That said I would have challenged Chris Rock later in the bathroom."

The writer and producer explained how every single comment passed about your appearance is like a punch.

She said: "If it's a bad comment about your appearance, whether about your weight, your clothes, it's never pleasant."

"But your hair is so obvious, it's literally your crowning glory."

"If everyone who has a bad hair day feels like crap for the day, you can understand a little bit of what it's like."

"I'm sure that day Jada was conscious of people looking at her."

"She probably was wondering if she would hear some snide remarks from people."

"Would she see anyone pointing at her?"

"She was probably preparing herself for days before this."

"But her husband should have stayed calm and dealt with it privately later that night."

Yvonne was in her 40s when she started noticeably losing her hair nearly four years ago, without warning.

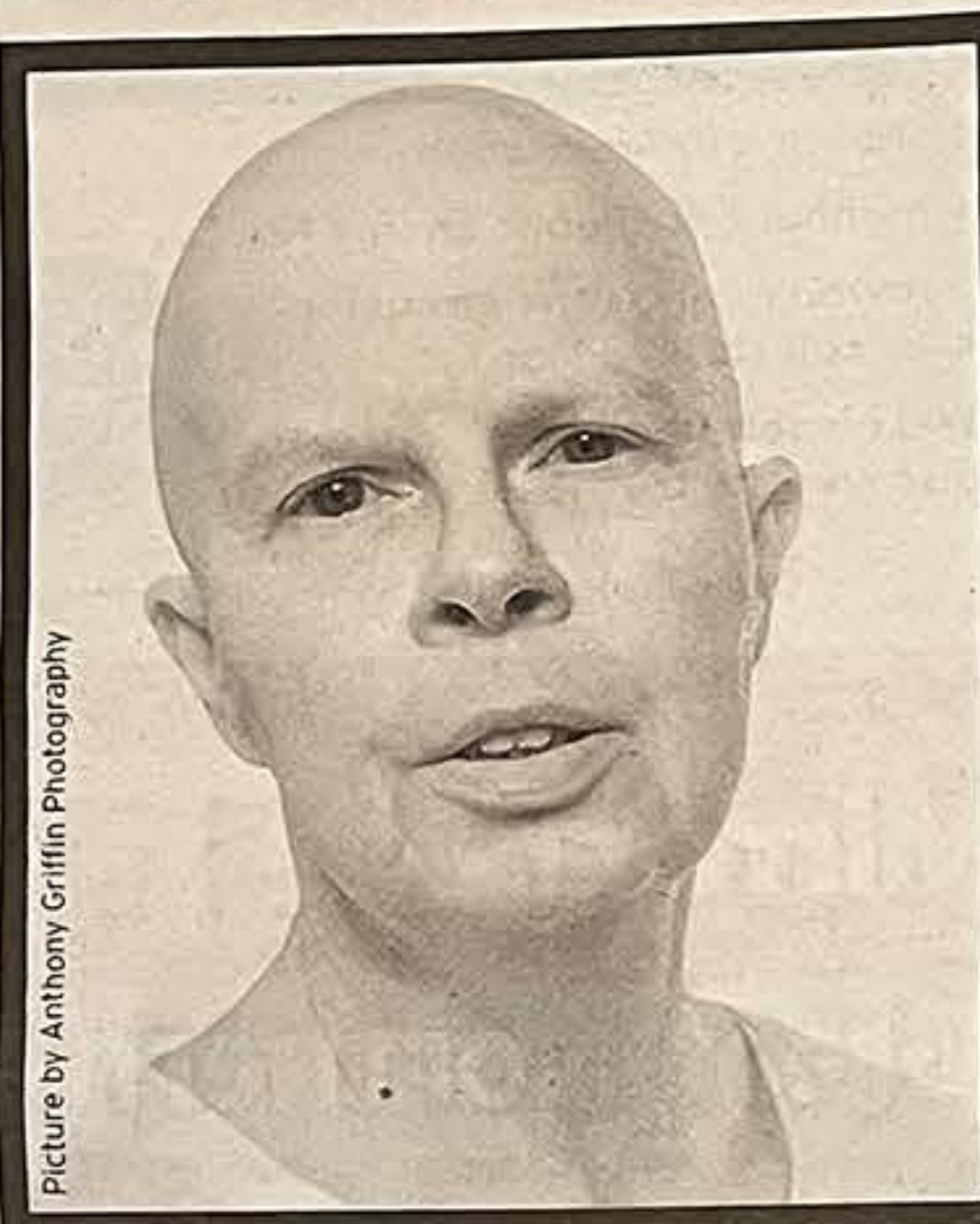
She knew a lot about alopecia as her daughter Shannon lost all her long blonde hair when she developed the condition aged 12. Shannon

noticed it falling out on the floor as she was hairdrying it and within five days she couldn't go out without a hat.

Over a decade later, the same thing happened to mum Yvonne.

Both mother and daughter have a severe form of alopecia, meaning they have no hair on their bodies.

Yvonne said: "Alopecia can be caused by stress, by hormones, if your immune system is low - your immune system fights off your hair because it sees your hair as a foreign



Picture by Anthony Griffin Photography



COVER STORY Slobhann O'Connor with wig specialist Aidan Fitzgerald at his Blackrock boutique and Yvonne Kinsella who availed of his expertise on the day. Left, Paddy Pender

Living with alopecia is no laughing matter, but the right wig can give you back your dignity..

DUBLINER Yvonne Kinsella's timely advice for fellow sufferers

object. All those years I used to say I wished my hair would fall out so shed get it back.

"There was nothing I could do, that was the killer thing as a mammy. It's been three-and-a-half years since I lost my own hair, although I've always had spurts of hair loss."

Her advice to anyone experiencing it for the first time is to stay calm, and try not to set yourself up for disappointment, adding: "I'd advise people not to get too hopeful. Just try to cope with it rather than wish it never happened."

She also recommends making a plan to go and see a wig specialist, like Aidan Fitzgerald's Private Wig Boutique in Dublin's Blackrock. She

said: "Number one rule if you lose your hair is this; don't go into panic mode."

"Instead, go and talk to someone and find some solutions for your individual situation, she urges, as panic only makes your situation worse."

Yvonne continues that bullying about baldness must be stamped out, adding: "Earlier this month, a 12-year-old child took her own life in America. It was because she was being bullied over her alopecia."

"It was public knowledge. It's still very raw and I'm sure there are many children and adults being bullied because of alopecia, and also being bullied behind their backs and sniggered at. Whether your disability

is visible or not, it should never be singled out and you should never be made to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about it.

"Whether it's being blind, being fat or deaf or having no hair."

"It doesn't matter what it is, it's your personal disability."

"You have to deal with this every day and nobody has the right to out you publicly."

"Chris was so wrong in what he did."

"Everyone should stop, don't stare and comment on people, you never know when something could happen to you or your children. It's only then you



Stylist Aidan Fitzgerald and Yvonne Kinsella



ANGERED Will Smith with his wife Jada Pinkett Smith and that slap on CHRIS ROCK



CROWING GLORY Stylist Aidan Fitzgerald and Yvonne Kinsella

Tips for choosing right one for you

- FEEL LIKE YOU**
"For most people they want to look like they did before, there's no point in going for blonde or red hair if you didn't have them before."
- GET THE RIGHT FIT**
You can style the wigs as they come in but getting a professional fit is so important.
- MEASURE**
Getting professionally measured and fitted is so important, don't miss this crucial step and always get a professional wig specialist's help.
- BE SELECTIVE**
Narrow your wig choice down to two to three wigs. You can always get your wig styled and personalise it then.
- TAKE THE TIME OUT TO RESEARCH YOUR WIG**
If you start to notice hair loss take time for yourself to research the best wig for you.
- GO TO A REPUTABLE WIG SPECIALIST**
Trevor Sorbet is a specialist who trains the best of the best, he's created more of a stylish vibe which is so important for women or men losing their hair.
- PAY EXTRA FOR FEATHER LIKE SCALPS**
Quality speaks volumes and you will feel far more comfortable. Doing your research first makes the journey far easier.

BEAUTY BUZZ

By KATIE GALLAGHER



Nutrients that help Grow It

Step up sustainable Irish hair brand, Grow It by Annutri, natural, vegan-friendly hair supplement Grow It by Annutri.

It's exactly what you need to nourish your hair from within and transform those frizzy post-party broken tresses into enviable, silky strands.

Grow It feeds our bodies with the nutrients that we need to grow thicker, stronger and longer locks, so when hopping aboard the fitness train and adding healthy, nutritious food to your diet, the all-important active ingredients found in this are the perfect addition to support your hair growth goals.

Hair follicles are super sensitive to nutrient deficiencies and it is imperative that you ensure your body is getting the correct nourishment to create an ideal environment for healthy hair growth.

There's no doubt about it, having a well-balanced diet filled with leafy greens and healthy fats, along with the introduction of a high quality, nutrient filled hair supplement, creates the perfect foundation for allowing your hair to flourish from strength to length.

Latin for "nourish yourself", Annutri, is made right here in Ireland, and containing specifically selected active ingredients such as Biotin, MSM (Methylsulfonylmethane) which is a natural form of Sulphur, Copper, Zinc, Nettle Leaf, Vitamin C, Vitamin B5, Horsetail, Choline, Spirulina and Wheatgrass among many more nutrients, it's a win win.

Grow It works by aiding hair growth in the initial stages, deep beneath the scalp where the follicle is forming, ensuring it is nourished with the nutrients it needs to look and feel healthy and strong.

"When it was obvious my hair wouldn't last much longer I got a wig. I had to break the news to my family to let them know."

"It knocks your confidence, you feel people are passing comments and noticing things."

"It was inappropriate to do what he did, because there are people out there who aren't as strong as Jada. She's been