



Consumer News & Views

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Consumer Confidence Increases in October



The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index® increased in October to 108.7 (1985=100), up from 99.2 in September.

U.S. consumers' confidence recorded the strongest monthly gain since March 2021, but still did not break free of the narrow range that has prevailed over the past two years.

- Consumers' assessments of current business conditions turned positive.
- On a six-month moving average basis, householders aged under 35 and those earning over \$100K remained the most confident.
- The proportion of consumers anticipating a recession over the next 12 months dropped to its lowest level since the question was first asked in July 2022.
- Consumers became more upbeat about the stock market: 51.4% of consumers expected stock prices to increase over the year ahead, the highest reading since the question was first asked in 1987.

The Present Situation Index—based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions—increased by 14.2 points to 138.0.

The Expectations Index—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions—increased by 6.3 points to 89.1, well above the threshold of 80 that usually signals a recession ahead.

Biggest Retirement Mistakes



Retirement. It's a word that evokes a mix of excitement and anxiety. For many, it represents well-earned relaxation. But for others, retirement feels like a looming financial cliff.

The truth is, a comfortable retirement requires careful planning and strategic investment. Unfortunately, common missteps can easily derail your financial goals.

Here are some of the most common mistakes people make when it comes to their retirement accounts. Understanding these pitfalls is the first step toward avoiding them.

Big mistakes people make in their retirement accounts

It's easy to understand why retirement missteps are so common. Our lives are busy juggling work, family and personal commitments, so financial planning often takes a backseat. Add to that the overwhelming amount of information — some accurate, some misleading — and it's no wonder many people feel lost.

Here are the biggest mistakes people make with their retirement accounts, according to experts, along with solutions and strategies to help you bypass failure on the road to retirement.

Not contributing more to your account — regardless of the company match

Contributing enough to snag the full match from your employer workplace 401(k) or similar plan should be a no-brainer. Most employers offer either a 50 percent match on the first 6 percent of contributions, or a 100 percent match on the first 3 percent and then 50 percent on the next 2 percent (for a 4 percent total match), according to a 2022 study by Vanguard.

It's essentially free money for your future, and who can argue with that?

But if your employer doesn't offer a match, don't let that stop you from investing, says Stephanie Genkin, a certified financial planner and owner of My Financial Planner LLC in Brooklyn, New York.

After all, not all employers offer a company match. In fact, a third of private civilian workers (33 percent) in 2023 didn't have access to any employer defined contribution plan, such as a 401(k) or 403(c)(b), according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"You need to save for retirement whether there's a match or not," says Genkin. "The automated nature of going straight from your paycheck to your selected investments is an important feature."

Even if your company offers a match, it often only amounts to about 3 to 5 percent. Most financial experts recommend saving 15 to 20 percent of your salary for retirement, so contributing only enough to get the match may cause you to fall short of your long-term savings goals.

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CONTINUED**Ignoring your account until you're in your 50s**

It's easy to neglect your savings when retirement is decades away. Other financial priorities — such as buying a home or paying off debt — often take priority, so it's easy to put off contributions until later.

But when later eventually arrives, many people panic at their low retirement account balances, says Genkin.

"They wind up kicking themselves that they didn't pay more attention to what was going on or seek advice early on to help them accumulate a bigger nest egg," she says.

Delaying contributions can dramatically impact your future financial well-being. The power of compound interest is a beautiful thing, but it needs time to work its magic. The earlier you start investing, the more time your money has to grow. Genkin recommends increasing your retirement contributions by 1 to 2 percent annually until you hit the IRS maximum. That cap increases each year for inflation, and in 2024, the maximum contribution limit for a 401(k) is \$23,000 a year, with an additional \$7,500 catch-up contribution for those 50 and older.

By starting small in your 20s, then gradually bumping up contributions as your salary increases in your 30s and 40s, you can avoid unpleasant surprises in your 50s.

Identifying a savings target during your working years is also helpful, says Scott Oeth, a CFP and principal at Cahill Financial Advisors in Edina, Minnesota. Enlisting professional help is another smart move.

Investing too aggressively

Your age plays a major role in determining the appropriate level of risk for your investment portfolio. People investing in their 20s and 30s have a longer investment horizon, which allows them to weather market fluctuations. They can afford to be more aggressive with their investments, leaning heavily toward stocks, which historically have netted higher returns over the long run.

But as you approach retirement, your portfolio should generally shift to more conservative investments. Fixed income investments like bonds and certificates of deposit, which generally offer steadier returns, become a bigger part of your portfolio. This is because you have less time to recover from losses and preserving your nest egg becomes a priority.

"You don't want to try to play catch up by being more aggressively invested when you're in spitting distance from leaving the workforce," Genkin says. "You could inadvertently undermine your retirement savings in the event of a prolonged market downturn."

Another pitfall is assuming the good times will last forever. Maybe you've enjoyed great returns from your stock-heavy portfolio over the last 20 years. That's fantastic — but it's still important to diversify, says Oeth.

"People who've made big money during boom year cycles may stick with volatile portfolios, then be whipsawed by a downturn and the need to pull out funds for retirement living expenses," he says.

For those who've fallen behind on retirement savings, increasing contributions as much as possible while still maintaining a balanced portfolio appropriate for your age is a good approach to take, according to experts. Consulting with a financial advisor can help you develop a personalized plan to maximize your savings potential without taking unnecessary risks.

Or investing too conservatively

On the flip side, investing too conservatively when you're young can also put your retirement account at risk. Stocks historically outperform bonds over the long term. So if you avoid stocks in favor of safer but lower-yielding investments during your working years, you're potentially missing out on substantial growth opportunities. Additionally, a conservative investment strategy may not generate sufficient returns to meet your long-term financial goals, says Joe Conroy, a CFP and owner at Harford Retirement Planners in Bel Air, Maryland.

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CONTINUED**Lack of tax diversification**

Relying solely on traditional IRAs or 401(k)s can lead to a hefty tax bill in retirement. While these accounts offer great up-front tax breaks, ordinary income tax rates on withdrawals can take a bite out of your nest egg later on.

“Most folks enter retirement with a bulk of their assets in company pre-tax accounts, leaving little room for tax planning,” says Conroy. “It’s best to spread money around to taxable and Roth accounts, in addition to pre-tax 401(k)s and IRAs.”

A Roth IRA or Roth 401(k) offers tax-free withdrawals in retirement, which can be a game-changer. A combination of traditional and Roth accounts can provide some much-needed flexibility and help manage your tax burden in retirement.

A Roth IRA also avoids a major downside of traditional retirement accounts — required minimum distributions (RMDs) — which begin at age 73. It is basically the IRS forcing people to withdraw money from those accounts, even if they don’t need or want to.

Not having a clear distribution strategy

Having a well-defined plan for withdrawing money from your retirement accounts is crucial. Without a strategy, you risk outliving your savings. Williams says he’s met with many clients who aren’t sure where to start when it comes to creating a retirement withdrawal strategy.

Meet with a financial advisor and asking the following questions:

- Which accounts should I draw from and in what amounts?
- How do I control my tax bill?
- What do I do during a down market?
- How does inflation erode purchasing power?
- Which accounts are more advantageous to leave behind to loved ones?

When developing your distribution plan, consider factors such as your expected expenses, Social Security benefits and RMDs. There are numerous types of withdrawal strategies out there, including the 4 percent rule and the bucket approach, which involves dividing your retirement savings into different pots for short-, medium- and long-term expenses.

Not planning for the psychological challenges of retirement

Retirement is more than just accumulating a nest egg — it’s a major life transition. Many people overlook the psychological challenges that come with leaving the workforce, and a regular paycheck, behind.

“If you take someone who spent the last 40 years receiving a check on the 1st and 15th of each month, and that’s suddenly shut off overnight, it can create a bit of a mental crisis,” says Williams.

Even if you have more than enough savings, it can be challenging to replicate the consistency and security of a steady paycheck. Social Security benefits and annuities, when appropriate, can make up for part of that missing element.

But Williams has another solution to help soon-to-be retirees avoid paycheck paralysis.

“Something as simple as a cash management account that automatically deposits what they need into their bank account monthly does wonders to remove anxiety and fear during that transition period,” says Williams.

Bottom line

Saving for retirement can be complex, but understanding common pitfalls is a good way to avert ugly surprises later. By starting early, diversifying investments and creating a comprehensive plan, you can increase your chances of a comfortable retirement. You can start taking proactive steps today to educate yourself about retirement planning and consider speaking with a financial advisor to help you map out a personalized plan tailored to your specific needs.



Mindfulness is as Effective as Leading Antidepressant to Treat Anxiety Disorders



Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) was found to be as effective as the antidepressant escitalopram in reducing agoraphobia, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and social anxiety disorder symptoms. The multi-institution study, led by the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, suggests that mindfulness practices may offer a viable alternative to medication for treating anxiety disorders, with significantly fewer side effects.

Anxiety disorders affect millions of people and are frequently treated with medications like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). While SSRIs can be an effective tool in countering the symptoms of anxiety disorders, they also come with side effects that can negatively impact a patient's quality of life in other ways.

In the case of escitalopram (sold as Lexapro and Cipralox), these adverse effects include nausea, headaches, dry mouth, excessive sweating, insomnia and fatigue.

The research team previously demonstrated that eight weeks of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) was non-inferior to escitalopram in providing stress relief and emotional regulation without having additional drawbacks.

In a new research letter, "Mindfulness Meditation vs Escitalopram for Treatment of Anxiety Disorders: Secondary Analysis of a Randomized Clinical Trial," published in JAMA Network Open, the team presents the secondary outcomes of patient-reported anxiety, depression, and quality of life from the previous study.

The study involved 276 adults diagnosed with various anxiety disorders (including agoraphobia, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and social anxiety disorder). Participants were randomly assigned to either the MBSR program or escitalopram treatment. The MBSR group attended weekly sessions focused on mindfulness meditation techniques, while the escitalopram group received dosages ranging from 10 to 20 mg per day with regular clinical follow-ups.

Researchers used multiple standardized scales to measure anxiety, depression, and quality of life, both from patient and clinician perspectives. Blinded evaluators conducted assessments using tools like the Beck Anxiety Inventory and the PROMIS Anxiety Short Form.

Findings revealed that both groups experienced similar reductions in anxiety symptoms over the study period. No significant differences were detected between MBSR and escitalopram in overall anxiety reduction by week 8, the study's primary endpoint. Escitalopram showed a slight edge in symptom reduction at the mid-treatment point (week 4), but these improvements were not sustained by the end of the study.

Adverse event rates were the only significant difference between the two treatments. Nearly 79% of escitalopram recipients reported at least one study-related side effect, compared to just 15% of those in the mindfulness group.

The findings lend greater support for the use of mindfulness-based stress reduction as a reliable treatment for anxiety disorders with fewer risks, making a compelling case for its broader application in clinical settings.

Top Secret Things You Didn't Know Your Smartphone Can Do



The capabilities of smartphones are seemingly endless -- and yet peoples' use of their devices often remains limited to areas they already know about. A smartphone can do so much more than just surf the web, make video calls, play music, stream video, and send texts.

One big problem is that there are now so many features packed into a smartphone that finding them, remembering them, and using them is a genuine challenge. Some of those hidden smartphone features can help improve your productivity and make everyday tasks easier. If there's something you need to get done, there's a pretty good chance your smartphone can help you do it.

To bring your smartphone use to the next level, we've rounded up some smartphone features that you might not know about, but which are sure to make everyday tasks easier.

Scan documents

If you have ever had to sign a physical document and then submit it digitally afterwards, you know how much of a hassle it can be to print out, scan, and then email the document. The good news is that you no longer have to turn to your clunky scanner. With both iPhones and Android devices, you can use the smartphone to scan a document and export it.

On iPhones, all you have to do is open your Notes app, click the camera icon, and then hit the "scan documents" button, and you're set. On an Android device, the process is even more seamless. All you have to do is open your camera app, hover it over the document, and tap "scan document" for Pixel phones, or the yellow "T" icon for Samsung devices.

Start your car

Before you get your hopes up, your ability to use your phone as a key or car-starter will depend entirely on the model, make, and year of your car.

Thankfully, a lot of cars have this type of functionality. Two reasons why you might want to take advantage of this feature include the ability to remotely start your car from the comfort of your own home or setting the car temperature just the way you like it before you get in.

If you're interested in this feature, look up your car on the web and see if there's an app that can help. For example, Ford has an app called FordPass, which allows Ford car owners to unlock and lock cars, remotely start the car, and even schedule remote starts from the app. Android devices have a feature called digital key on select smartphones, which works in tandem with your car manufacturer's app or the manufacturer's email to make your phone a digital key.

Help you change channels

There are few things more frustrating than getting ready to watch a show, sitting on the couch, settling down with your blanket and snacks, and then realizing you can't find the remote. Once this realization hits, you have to dig to find the remote, only to find out that the batteries are flat. To spare you this trouble, many TVs are capable of syncing to your smartphone to turn your device into a remote.

If you have an iPhone, you can use it to control compatible TVs including Roku or Fire TVs, or an Apple TV 4K. It's as easy as being logged on to the same network as the TV, going to the screen-share option, and then hitting the remote icon. If you want to use your iPhone as a remote control, we have a handy how-to.

Android smartphones have the same capability with Android TVs. All you have to do is open the Google TV app, tap the remote icon on the bottom right, and then scan devices and choose your device to complete pairing, according to Android. In addition, Android has TV remote apps for Roku and Fire TVs, and even third-party remote apps for Apple TV.

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CONTINUED**Measure stuff**

Don't have a tape measure? No problem. You can take measurements of anything you need to on your phone using your smartphone's camera and AR technology. All you have to do is drop a point at the beginning of the object you're measuring and pin another point at the end to get the exact measurement.

Phones come with the Apple Measure app preloaded, but if you're an Android user, don't fret. You can simply use Measure Up, Google's tool that lets you do what the Apple Measure app does, but on your phone's browser instead of via an app.

Take photos for you

Have you ever wanted to take a picture, but had no one to take it for you? The scenery is beautiful and your outfit is perfect, but you can't spot anyone around -- so your photo opportunity is ruined. Sure there is your phone's timer, but that can be near useless because you have to set everything up for just one photo to be taken. Thankfully, Lens Buddy is an app made to solve that problem.

With Lens Buddy, you can fully customize the timer, including the speed and intervals of the pictures, so you can get the perfect shot. Instead of having to set up a ten second timer for your phone only to snap one photo, you can set a timer that takes many photos over a customized interval (ex: every three seconds) for as long as you'd like. With Lens Buddy, you have a lot of options to pick from from one session instead of just one. The app is only available on iOS. However, there are camera-timer alternatives in the Google Play Store, such as Selfer, which does the same thing.

**Monitor your heart rate**

Despite the plethora of smartwatches and fitness trackers on the market, it is possible to monitor your heart rate with just your smartphone. Heart-rate monitoring apps use your back camera and flash to determine how much blood is pumping through your skin and get your heart rate through a practice called photoplethysmography. To get your results within seconds, all you have to do is place your finger over the camera and flash.

These mobile heart-rate monitoring apps do not come with your phone as standard, but can be downloaded in your smartphone's app store. To figure out which one to download, I recommend going to the app store and downloading a free app with the most positive reviews. There are many perks to regularly tracking your heart rate, including being more in-tune with you body. I personally used one of these apps to monitor my irregular heart rate and, ultimately, got my heart condition diagnosed.

Hold your medical insurance card

If you own a smartphone, you are likely familiar with the concept of a digital wallet. With a digital wallet, you can add cards, boarding passes, tickets, and more to your smartphone for easy access when paying or entering certain events.

But did you know that you can also add your health insurance card? I love this feature because my pesky health insurance card always gets stuck to other cards in my wallet just when you need it.

For your convenience, many insurance providers, including Cigna and Aetna, allow for mobile access to your insurance card. All you have to do is download the app for your insurance provider and sign in. There, both iPhone and Android users will find your mobile health insurance card, which you can then present at any healthcare provider. If you are an iPhone user, you get the added perk of adding it to your Apple Wallet.

Bonus feature

Just as a reminder for those of you who might have forgotten: as well as working as a compass, flashlight, TV remote, and thousands of other functions that you can download as apps, your smartphone can also... make calls. Yes, really!

Why are there So Many Recalls?--How Listeria is wreaking havoc on our food



Customers shop in the deli meat aisle of a grocery store on October 17, 2024 in Miami, Florida.

It has been a very busy year for food recalls in the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced several recalls over the past few months for everything from ice cream and waffles to fresh produce and even millions of pounds of deli meat.

And they all had one thing in common, they were triggered due to fears of potential contamination of *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacterium that can cause serious and sometimes deadly infections.

The most fatal of the outbreaks so far – with 10 deaths – has been linked to a Boar's Head deli meat plant in Virginia. More recently, BrucePac, an Oklahoma-based producer of precooked meat, recalled this month nearly 10 million pounds of products sold in the nation's top grocery chains, including Walmart (WMT), Kroger (KR), 7-Eleven (SVNDY), and Trader Joe's.

The apparent rise in *Listeria*-related recalls is concerning. *Listeria monocytogenes* can cause serious listeriosis infections in young children, elderly people, and people with weakened immune systems. The FDA also warns that *Listeria* infections could cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women. Even among healthy people, a *Listeria* infection can lead to symptoms including high fever, headaches, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

An estimated 1,600 people in the U.S. get listeriosis ever year, with about 260 annual fatalities, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

So, why are *Listeria* contaminations seemingly on the rise?

"What we're seeing is likely a perfect storm of factors: regulatory transitions, pandemic-related inspection gaps, increased detection capabilities, and economic pressures. Together, these elements have led to a surge in recalls." Dr. Darin Detwiler, a food safety advisor and professor at Northeastern University, told Quartz in an email. "While it's unclear if one particular issue is driving the trend, the combination suggests that there are vulnerabilities within the food regulatory system that need to be addressed to restore consumer confidence."

Better and more accurate detection

One reason recalls seem to be on the rise is improvements in testing technology. For example, Detwiler said that the widespread use of whole genome sequencing, a process for analyzing an organism's DNA, is making it easier to detect pathogens like *Listeria*.

"These advanced methods can trace contamination more effectively, leading to quicker recalls," said Detwiler. "This may create the perception that recalls are becoming more frequent, when in reality, we are simply identifying contamination more efficiently than before."

A rise in demand of ready-to-eat food products

However, it not just better testing that is leading to all these recalls. The recalls could also reflect a shift in consumer preferences and production methods.

Detwiler pointed out that consumers are generally relying more on ready-to-eat food products such as deli meats, cheese, salads, and precooked meat. These products often are stored in refrigerators or freezers.

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Common Drugs That Cause Hair Loss

Hair loss may occur as a side effect of certain medications that interfere with hair growth or cause hair to shed.

Medications that can cause hair loss include:

- Retinoids
- Antifungals
- Mood stabilizers
- Blood thinners
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines
- Antithyroid medications
- Hormonal medications
- Antihypertensives
- Chemotherapy

Most of the time, the hair loss is reversible, with hair growing back a few months after stopping or reducing the medication.²

Here we will cover medications that can cause hair loss, why it happens, and tips on preventing, stopping, or reversing this effect.

How Do Medications Cause Hair Loss?

Many commonly prescribed medications can cause temporary hair loss, baldness, and even permanent hair loss.

Medications can affect hair in two ways: by halting hair growth or causing hair to fall out early. Sometimes, both of these things can happen at once.¹

Hair Loss and Growth: Why Does It Happen?

Each hair strand goes through a cycle of growth, transition, and rest.² The growth phase is called anagen and can last from a few months to a few years. During anagen, the hair follicle produces hair continuously.¹

The next phase is a transitional phase. It is called catagen. During this phase, the hair follicle shrinks, and hair growth slows down.

The resting phase is called telogen and lasts for about 100 days.⁴ During this time, the hair remains anchored inside the follicle. Hair shedding occurs only when the follicle re-enters the anagen phase and produces a new hair shaft.



Types of Medication-Induced Hair Loss

Anagen effluvium is the process in which a medication causes hair loss by halting hair growth. With anagen effluvium, hair loss usually occurs within days or weeks of starting the medicine.

Hair loss can be severe and sudden, affecting a lot of hair at once. Sometimes, hair can be easily plucked out, and it may look different. Hair loss is usually temporary, but it can take a few weeks for hair to start growing back. Anagen effluvium is commonly associated with anticancer medicines and radiation therapy.² Anticancer drugs cause this type of hair loss by damaging hair cells that grow quickly so that they can target fast-growing cancer cells.

When a medication causes hair loss through telogen effluvium, hair sheds excessively. In the human scalp, the telogen phase typically lasts about three months, at the end of which the telogen hair sheds.

Telogen effluvium causes the shedding to happen prematurely. It may take one to six months before hair loss is noticeable. This cause of hair loss can be challenging to identify, given the delay between the trigger and the onset of hair loss.

With telogen effluvium, hair loss may not be severe and may not affect much hair. Usually, the hair loss goes away on its own without any treatment.

CONTINUED ON P.11

CONTINUED**Medications That Can Cause Hair Loss**

Medications that cause hair loss through telogen effluvium include:

- Retinoids, including acitretin, isotretinoin, and Tazorac (tazarotene)
- Antifungals, including Diflucan (fluconazole) and Vfend (voriconazole)
- Mood stabilizers, including valproate/divalproex, Lithobid (lithium), and Wellbutrin (bupropion)
- Blood thinners, including Jantoven (warfarin) and Heparin injections
- Cholesterol-lowering drugs, including Lipid (gemfibrozil)
- Antithyroid medications, including iodine, thiouracil, and carbimazole
- Hormonal medications, including contraceptives, hormone-replacement therapy for women (estrogen or progesterone), male androgenic hormones, and all forms of testosterone and anabolic steroids
- Antihypertensives (blood pressure lowering drugs) including Tenormin (atenolol), Lopressor (metoprolol), Corgard (nadolol), and Inderal LA (propranolol)

Medications that cause hair loss through anagen effluvium include:

- Chemotherapeutic agents, including doxorubicin, Cytoxan (cyclophosphamide), Trexall (methotrexate), and Hydrea (hydroxyurea)

Retinoids

Retinoids are a class of medicines derived from vitamin A. They help treat certain skin conditions, such as acne. Hair loss is a reported side effect of oral retinoids, such as isotretinoin.

The extent and severity of hair loss usually depend on the dosage and duration of the treatment. If you experience hair loss while taking retinoids, your healthcare provider may adjust your dosage or advise you to stop taking the medication.

Antifungals

Antifungals are prescribed to treat fungal infections. Hair loss takes about three months after starting the medication.

Fortunately, hair loss caused by antifungals is reversible, and complete regrowth can be expected within three to six months after stopping or reducing the dosage.

Some antifungal medications have a lower risk of causing hair loss. In a clinical trial, 82% of people who were off voriconazole, an antifungal, for three months reported that their hair loss had stopped, with regrowth noted in 69%. This included those who had switched to two other antifungal drugs: itraconazole or posaconazole.

Mood Stabilizers

Mood stabilizers are commonly used to treat certain mental health conditions, like depression or bipolar disorder and sometimes epilepsy. Some of these medicines have a higher risk of causing hair loss than others.

Valproate/divalproex can cause hair loss, which usually becomes noticeable three to six months after starting the medication. The amount of hair loss is directly proportional to the dose. It can also cause other hair-related effects, such as curling, graying, and changing the appearance or texture.

Your healthcare provider may manage hair loss seen with these treatments by lowering your dose, stopping your medication, or recommending complementary hair care support, such as vitamin and mineral supplements.

Hair loss associated with valproate is usually reversible, with hair regrowth happening within two to three months after stopping the medication or reducing the dose.

Other mood stabilizers, such as lithium, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), and bupropion may also cause hair loss.

Hair loss with SSRIs and bupropion, although possible, is not as common.¹ If you experience hair loss, your healthcare provider will evaluate the potential benefits of switching to another medication versus the risks of stopping the medication.

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CONTINUED**Blood Thinners**

Depending on the specific drug, around 30% to 40% to up to half of people who take blood thinners (anticoagulants) may experience hair loss. Hair loss is more frequently observed in women than men.

After stopping the medication, hair regrowth may take up to three months.¹⁰ The incidence of hair loss with these medications may depend on your dose, age, and duration of treatment.

Blood Pressure Medications

Some blood pressure medications have been known to cause hair loss. These include beta blockers like propranolol and metoprolol. These drugs may cause hair loss or brittleness.¹

Antithyroid Medications

Medications that treat thyroid disorders may cause hair-related effects, such as hair loss, dryness, or brittleness. However, thyroid conditions can also contribute to hair thinning and shedding, so it might be difficult to know whether the hair loss is due to your medication or the condition.

Chemotherapy

Many people receiving chemotherapy experience hair loss as a common side effect. Hair shedding usually starts within seven to 14 days of the first administration, and hair loss becomes evident one to two months after. In some cases; especially in those who take multiple cycles of chemotherapy, hair loss may be almost complete.

**How to Treat Medication-Induced Hair Loss**

The step is to identify what's causing your hair loss and consult your healthcare provider before stopping your medication. They can help you find an alternative medication and ensure a safe switch if necessary. Be patient, though, as hair regrowth after discontinuing the medication may take several months.

In some cases, you may not be able to stop the medication causing your hair loss. For this, Rogaine (minoxidil) or Latisse (bimatoprost) may help.

Minoxidil stimulates hair growth and should be used with other treatments. It takes six to twelve months to see results. You must continue using it daily even if you see regrowth. Bimatoprost is a prescription drug that promotes eyelash growth.

Other treatments for hair loss include:

- Scalp cooling
- Microneedling
- Injections of corticosteroids or platelet-rich plasma
- Laser therapy

Consult your healthcare provider or dermatologist for advice on the best treatment option.

Bottom Line

Hair loss is a common side effect of many medications. It can happen in two ways: by stopping hair growth or causing hair to shed early.

Medications that may cause hair loss include retinoids, blood pressure medications, chemotherapy, and more.

Most of the time, the hair loss is reversible, with hair resuming growth a few months after stopping or reducing the medication.

If it is impossible to stop taking the medication causing hair loss, several alternatives may be considered, such as medications for hair growth (e.g., Rogaine) or other methods like scalp cooling.

Reach out to your healthcare provider if you notice increased hair loss when taking a medication. They may lower your dosage or prescribe an option less likely to affect your hair.

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About Us Today

In 2016, SACU became Credit Human. Our new name reflects the San Antonio values that have guided us since we started here in 1935—a belief in others, giving credit to the dreams of our members, and being more human by treating each other with the respect that all of us deserve. This new name extends that belief to every member we serve, no matter where they live, or where they do business.

2000s

As the pace of technological change increased throughout the 2000s, SACU made thoughtful innovations to serve you better, including online banking, mobile banking, and more. We've grown, doing business across the country, under multiple brand names including CU Factory Built Lending, Mountainside Financial, Credit Acquisition Resources Systems (or CARS), and SACU. More than one-third of our members currently live outside the state of Texas. In 1999 SACU pioneered new technology in McCreless Mall with our first retail branch location, using the innovative Remote Teller System (RTS) to provide expedited services for our members.

The 1980s and 90s

The 1980s brought tough economic times to the country, including a depression in the oil business and a collapse in real estate. GECU continued to serve our membership by offering quality products and services.

The 1930s and 40s

It all started on March 7, 1935 when twelve federal government workers pooled their money to form the National Federation of Federal Employees Local No. 28. One of the first credit unions in San Antonio, the original members received thirty-seven loans that year, leaving the credit union with \$42.84 in profit. By the first annual meeting in 1936, membership had grown to 98, including the first woman to join. Credit unions struggled during World War II. The majority were unable to pay depositors a dividend. Local No. 28 was an exception, paying members a 3% annual dividend throughout the war years. By 1949, the credit union changed its name to Government Employees Credit Union (GECU), as membership had expanded beyond members of Local No. 28.

For more information, visit our website at www.nihfcu.org or call us toll-free at (800)688-7228.

Welcome one of our credit union partners!

As a nonprofit consumer education organization, ACC has developed partnerships with credit unions across the country. These partnerships allow ACC members eligibility with our credit unions. If approved, our members gain access to a member-owned financial institution, with products and services designed to make banking more affordable, simple and convenient, and to offer additional resources that can help our members identify and achieve their financial dreams.

Sharonview Credit Union
818 Tom Hall St
Fort Mill, SC 29715
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Proudly serving members since 1955

At Sharonview, we are dedicated to providing membership benefits that your banking experience a reward NC and SC communities. Being a member of our credit union comes with benefits such as access to competitive rates on savings accounts, checking accounts, loans, and even mortgages. Along with that, we like to make our members feel they are getting a personal banking experience, so we make sure you get tailored solutions that meet your unique financial needs and goals.

Our Story

Members have always been our focus. We started with 20 in 1955. We've grown to serve thousands through branches in South Carolina and North Carolina.

Since 1955, Sharonview Federal Credit Union has served members across the Carolinas and beyond. Named after two neighboring roads in Charlotte—Sharon Road and Fairview Road—we started with only a handful of employees and \$11,000 in assets. By the early '90s our company grew to offer mortgages, cash services, deposit accounts, and more. Our membership also grew! In 1993, over 34,000 members called Sharonview their credit union of choice.

Our company is built on relationships, trust, and reliability. Credit unions like ours are built to serve the community and that's what we strive to do every day. Through our Community Pillars, financial literacy outreach, and everyday interactions, we plan to do our part to make our communities thrive. And, by offering you personalized service, a range of loan and deposit products, and competitive rates, we aim to empower you with the tools and resources you need to thrive.

We Are Committed to:

Alleviating Hunger

Hunger is all around us—at school, work, or in our social groups. Through foodbank donations, volunteering our time to build care packages, and working with local organizations focused on food insecurity, Sharonview is dedicated to providing for our communities. Recent partnerships include Second Harvest Foodbank of the Metrolina, Lancaster Chamber of Commerce "Feed the Funnel" with The Pack Shack, United Way, and The Independence Fund.

Alleviating Homelessness

The Charlotte Housing and Homeless Dashboard indicates over 2,800 individuals in the Charlotte-metro area were without permanent housing in 2023. The number is staggering, yet this area makes up only a portion of the communities we serve. We regularly partner with organizations like Habitat for Humanity to address housing issues in our neighborhoods. We're also committed to working with organizations to address the root causes for homelessness and how to get our community members into more sustainable housing situations.

Advocating for Mental Health

There is no question that mental health is vital to our overall well-being. By understanding and advocating for proper mental health care, we can create lasting awareness for the illnesses and disorders that affect so many, including our loved ones, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. We were proud to partner with the National Alliance for Mental Illness in 2023's NAMIWalks awareness walk. We also spend time with local community chambers, leadership groups, and schools to empower those around us through camaraderie, mutual respect, and relationship building.

For more information, visit our website at www.sharonview.org or call us toll-free at (800)462.4421.

ACC Wrap Up

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMER COUNCIL



Green C Certification

If your company or organization would like to increase its credibility with consumers, you should consider applying for ACC's **"Green C" Certification**.

Applications for the Fall cycle are being accepted through October 31, 2024.

It's a proven fact that consumers prefer to do business with eco-friendly companies, implement green initiatives and that practice Corporate Social Responsibility. The process is straight-forward, and all applicants are recognized by the ACC and the Green USA Institute.

All applicants should review the criteria, then complete and submit their applications to ACC's Green Consumer Council for review, assessment and feedback. Program details and the Green C Certification criteria can be viewed online at www.AmericanConsumerCouncil.org/education.

For more information, call 1-800-544-0414 or visit ACC's website.

Friend of the Consumer

Is your business consumer-friendly?

Does your business deserve greater recognition for its service to consumers?

If so, you should apply for the American Consumer Council's Friend of the Consumer Award.



Each year, ACC awards numerous "Friend of the Consumer" awards to deserving manufacturers, retailers, and other businesses that produce or sell products in the United States, and which meet or exceed federally mandated standards, and have "demonstrated a commitment to American consumers by providing products or services that foster consumer confidence and market acceptance."

To apply, complete the online application at: www.americanconsumercouncil.org/awards.asp and return it to ACC with the application fee.

Applicants will be notified within five days of receipt of their application. Thereafter, a panel of independent judges will review your application and make a formal recommendation within 20 days of your submission.



Financial Education

ACC is pleased to have a partnership with Nicole Middendorf. Nicole is a money maven, a knowledge junkie, and a born coach. She is an entrepreneur who left Morgan Stanley in 2003 to run her own wealth management firm. Nicole is the author of five books, a world traveler, philanthropist, and an accomplished public speaker.

As a Wealth Advisor and Certified Divorce Financial Analyst with Prosperwell Financial, her main focus is to help people create wealth from the inside out. She is able to accomplish this through one-on-one client meetings, writing books, presenting at conferences, and appearing on TV, radio, and other media.

Nicole shares financial advice and a real-life perspective on saving, planning, and investing with audiences across the country. Her primary goal is to take complicated subjects and make them easy to understand. She works hard to empower her audience to make crucial and positive changes in their own lives. Nicole's books have received local and national press coverage, where she has become known for her thoughtful concise quotes, relaxed on-air presence, and articulate delivery.

ACC is committed to promoting and providing financial education to the public. Nicole Middendorf has collaborated with us to create a new 6-part video series that promotes financial literacy for youth. Check it out here: <https://qcashfinancial.com/are-we-failing-our-kids-in-financial-literacy/>

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