

## Female Facial Hair

Female facial hair growth (also known as Hirsutism) is a relatively common condition affecting women of different ages and ethnic backgrounds. Some studies indicate that 10% of women in Western Society are affected but the condition is more common in women from the Mediterranean, Middle-Eastern or South Asian regions.

Importantly, although the common term is unwanted facial hair, this also includes the neck area under the chin.

There are different factors that may cause unwanted hair growth on a women's face. These include excess male hormones (which are normally produced in smaller quantities in females); family history; ethnic origin and Poly Cystic Ovary Syndrome (only in pre-menopausal women). Some medicines may cause hair growth as a side effect (eg Steroids). In around 25% of cases, there is no apparent underlying cause.

Dr Andrews always recommends discussing your condition with your GP.

### **Treatment:**

There is only one licensed topical preparation in the UK for unwanted female facial hair: Vaniqa (a brand of the drug Eflornithine). You cannot buy Vaniqa without a prescription in the UK, but Dr Andrews can issue a prescription for you, if suitable.

The treatment works by affecting an enzyme in the hair follicle which reduces the rate of hair growth. The cream must be applied twice daily and used regularly for two to three months before it's benefit can be seen. The beneficial effects are then only maintained by continual usage, if you stop applying the treatment, your usual rate of hair growth will return. If you see no improvement within four months, the treatment must be discontinued.

Vaniqa is applied thinly twice daily to the areas of unwanted hair growth and must be left on for at least four hours. It can be applied after other hair removal techniques. Also, your regular cosmetics may be applied after five minutes of using Vaniqa.

One tube of Vaniqa 60g will last approximately two months.

As with all medicines, you may experience some side effects. These are usually mild, and include stinging or burning of the skin or acne. A full list of side effects can be found on the Vaniqa patient information leaflet.

Vaniqa is not suitable for use in women who are under 18 or women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Further information can be found in the Patient Information Leaflet which is provided with every treatment that Dr Andrews supplies.

If you have any questions please contact Dr Andrews  
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