

## Hair Loss

A receding hairline above the temples is the usual first sign and then thinning of the hair on the crown of the scalp. Over the years, the thinning patches get larger and meet up leaving only hair at the sides and rear of the head (colloquially referred to as a Hippocratic Wreath).

The cause of male pattern baldness is well known and is caused by a hormone which affects the hair follicles on the scalp. The balding process occurs in men when they are overly sensitive to the hormone Dihydrotestosterone (DHT) and as a result the hair follicles grown smaller and smaller before eventually stopping their function completely. The condition is hereditary but can be well controlled with drug treatment. Unfortunately, the medicines used for male pattern baldness are not available on the NHS, but Dr Andrews can prescribe these treatments for the vast majority of men who require it.

Dr Andrews is run and operated in the UK by UK Doctors and Pharmacists with all the treatments being processed and sent from a UK Pharmacy using UK licensed medicines.

The treatment for male pattern baldness has two approaches. Firstly, the prescription only medicine Propecia (or the generic version, Finasteride) reduces the amount of DHT in the scalp, allowing the hair follicles to keep producing hair. Clinical trials have shown that 90% of men kept their hair using Propecia with 2 out of 3 men benefiting from new hair growth after being on treatment long term.

Propecia is the brand with Finasteride it's generic version and are both tablets. Medically, the two are the same, although the generic Finasteride is cheaper than the branded Propecia. Propecia has been the sole brand for many years but recently lost its patent protection allowing generic versions to be produced by different pharmaceutical companies.

The second type of treatment is topical, that is to say rubbed into the scalp. Regaine supports blood flow to the hair follicles keeping them healthy and producing hair.

## PROPECIA OR FINASTERIDE AND REGAINE CAN BE USED TOGETHER

Dr Andrews has patients who use both the tablets and the topical treatments together as they have different methods of action, so they can tackle the problem from two sides.

Importantly, neither treatment (used individually or together)

works straight away and has to be used for a number of months before a benefit is seen.

Further, the effect of the treatment only lasts for as long as you use it. Once you stop using it, the hair loss will recommence.

## PROPECIA & FINASTERIDE

The dose of Propecia (or generic Finasteride) is one tablet daily and should be taken for a minimum of 3-6 months before any benefit is seen. The medicine must continue to be used for the treatment to continue to work.

Importantly, Propecia and Finasteride are for use in men only and cannot be taken by a man who also takes Finasteride or Duasteride (medicines given in a much higher dose to treat prostate conditions). Both treatments are excreted from the body in semen and the drug can be harmful to unborn children so should not be used by men trying to start a family. Further, women of childbearing age should avoid handling the tablets.

The dose of Propecia or Finasteride used to treat hair loss is low, and so the side effects are generally mild with the treatment well tolerated. The following side effects have been reported: Erectile Dysfunction (impotence); reduction in libido (sex drive); ejaculation problems; breast tenderness and swelling, testicular pain.

Dr Andrews suggests that for first time users, one month of treatment should be purchased to check that the medicine will not agree with you. Most men will find the treatment is suitable and then further orders can be placed for larger quantities, making each dose better value.

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### REGAINE (MINOXIDIL)

Whilst Propecia and Finasteride are tablets, Regaine (a brand of the drug Minoxidil) is a treatment that is rubbed into the scalp. It works by increasing blood flow to the hair follicles and then has four effects:

- 1. Reverses the shrinking of the hair follicles**
- 2. Increases blood flow around the follicles**
- 3. Stimulates the hair follicles to move from resting to hair growth phase**
- 4. Extends the growth phase of the hair follicles**

Regaine needs to be used for over 3 months before a benefit is seen and then needs to be used continuously to maintain the effects.

Regaine comes in the form of a solution or a foam and contains 5% Minoxidil. It is applied twice daily as part of your grooming routine, rubbing the dose gently into the scalp. Your hair and scalp should be dry before you apply the treatment and you should wash your hands directly after applying.

Regaine can cause some side effects, mainly localised irritation to the scalp and changes in the colour or texture of your hair. It should not be used if the scalp is broken or infected. Further, it should not be used by any man who has significantly low blood pressure, an abnormal heart rhythm or angina.

Both the Regaine solution and foam come in one or three month packs.

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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