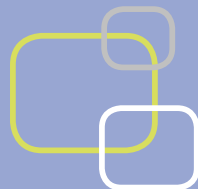


finasteride for male  
pattern hair loss  
information for patients



RoodlaneMedical

# Finasteride

Finasteride is licensed for the treatment of male-pattern baldness in men. Continuous use for 3–6 months is required before benefit is seen, and effects are reversed 6–12 months after treatment is discontinued.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

This medicine contains the active ingredient finasteride, which is a type of medicine called a type II 5-alpha reductase inhibitor.

Finasteride works by inhibiting the action of a compound in the body called type II 5-alpha reductase. This compound is called an enzyme, and is responsible for converting the male hormone testosterone into dihydrotestosterone (DHT). DHT is a hormone that can damage hair follicles and lead to hair loss in men who are genetically sensitive to it.

As finasteride prevents the action of type II 5-alpha reductase it prevents the formation of DHT. This decreases the amount of DHT both in the blood and the scalp and can lead to reversal of the balding process.

The medicine is taken by mouth to increase hair growth and prevent further hair loss in men with male pattern baldness. It may take three to six months of treatment before you notice a decrease in hair loss or increase in hair density. Continued use of this medicine is recommended to obtain the maximum benefit. If you stop taking it you are likely to lose any hair you have gained within 9 to 12 months. The usual dose is 1mg daily.

## WHAT IS IT USED FOR?

Male hair loss is the most common type of hair loss. It is caused by increased sensitivity to male sex hormones (androgens) in certain parts of the scalp, and is passed on from generation to generation. In the past, baldness was often seen as something unfortunate or undesirable.

## WHAT CAUSES MALE HAIR LOSS?

Some men have areas on the scalp that are very sensitive to the male sex hormones that circulate in men's blood. The hormones make the hair follicles - from which hair grows - shrink. Eventually, they become so small that they cannot replace lost hairs. The follicles are still alive, but are no longer able to perform their task.

The condition usually starts in men aged 20 to 30 and follows a typical pattern. First, a receding hairline develops, and gradually the hair on top of the head also begins to thin.

Eventually, the two balding areas meet to form a typical U-shape around the back and sides of the head. The hair that remains is often finer, and does not grow as quickly as it used to.

#### **WARNING!**

- Women who are pregnant or of childbearing age should not handle broken or crushed tablets of this medicine, as the medicine may be absorbed through the skin and be harmful to an unborn child.
- You should not exceed the prescribed dose of this medicine as this will not make it any more effective.

#### **NOT TO BE USED IN**

- Children
- Men taking 5-alpha reductase inhibitors for an enlarged prostate or other condition
- Women

If you feel you have experienced an allergic reaction, stop using this medicine and inform your doctor or pharmacist immediately.

#### **PREGNANCY AND BREASTFEEDING**

Women who are pregnant or of childbearing age must not handle crushed or broken tablets, as the medicine may be absorbed through the skin and cause abnormalities in a male foetus.

Whole tablets are coated to prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided they are not broken or crushed.

## **SIDE EFFECTS**

Medicines and their possible side effects can affect individual people in different ways. The following are some of the side effects that are known to be associated with this medicine. Because a side effect is stated here, it does not mean that all people using this medicine will experience that or any side effect.

- Difficulty getting an erection
- Breast tenderness/swelling
- Pain in the testicles
- Reduced volume of ejaculation
- Decreased sex drive
- Hypersensitivity reactions such as rash, itching, hives or swelling of the lips and face

The side effects listed above may not include all of the side effects reported by the drug's manufacturer.

For more information about any other possible risks associated with this medicine, please read the information provided with the medicine or consult your doctor or pharmacist.

## **HOW CAN THIS MEDICINE AFFECT OTHER MEDICINES?**

There are no significant interactions reported with this medicine.

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