

## Guide 2 Medication for hair loss

### Introduction

Welcome to Atlantis Medical's comprehensive guide on medication for hair loss. The different medications that can be used to treat hair loss will be discussed in this guide, including topical solutions, oral pharmaceuticals, antiandrogens, corticosteroids, antifungal agents, and other therapy alternatives. We will also discuss our research and education initiatives in the field of hair loss. Whether you're experiencing male or female pattern hair loss, this guide will provide valuable insights to help you make informed decisions about your hair health.

### Table of Contents

1. Topical Minoxidil
2. Oral Finasteride
3. Antiandrogens
4. Corticosteroids
5. Antifungal Medications
6. Other Medications
7. Our Research and Education in Hair Loss
8. Mechanism of Action
9. Lifestyle Changes
10. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Topical Minoxidil

Topical minoxidil is a widely used medication for hair loss. It is available over the counter and is applied directly to the scalp. Here are some key points to know about topical minoxidil:

- The anagen (growth phase) of one's hair cycle is hypothesised to be lengthened by minoxidil. It increases blood supply to the hair follicles.
- It is available in different strengths, usually 2% and 5% solutions or foams. The 5% strength is generally recommended for men, while women often use the 2% strength.
- The medication needs to be applied consistently to the scalp for optimal results. It may take several months to see noticeable hair growth, and results can vary from person to person.
- Minoxidil is generally safe to use, but some individuals may experience side effects such as scalp irritation or increased hair shedding during the initial stages of treatment.

## Oral Finasteride

Oral finasteride is a prescription medication primarily used for treating male pattern hair loss. Here's what you need to know about oral finasteride:

- Dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a hormone correlated to hair loss, is produced less due to finasteride's competitive inhibition of type II 5-alpha reductase.
- However, it is not FDA-approved for the treatment of female pattern hair loss.
- Finasteride, 1 mg once a day, can be used to treat male pattern hair loss. Results may be observed within a year of use, but individual responses can vary.
- Studies have shown that finasteride increases hair count, hair coverage, and hair mass compared to a placebo. Longer-term use generally leads to tremendous therapeutic success.
- Women with female pattern hair loss may not benefit from finasteride 1 mg. Still, higher doses may be effective in cases associated with hyperandrogenemia.
- Possible side effects of finasteride include erectile dysfunction, decreased libido, gynecomastia, testicular pain, and depression. However, these side effects are relatively rare.

## Antiandrogens

Antiandrogens are drugs that function by preventing the body's response to androgens (male hormones). They are sometimes prescribed to address hair loss in women. Here are a few critical points about antiandrogens:

- Antiandrogens can help slow down or halt hair loss in women with androgenetic alopecia (female pattern hair loss) by reducing the influence of androgens on the hair follicles.
- Spironolactone and cyproterone acetate are commonly used antiandrogens for treating hair loss in women.
- Due to the possibility of side effects and potential drug interactions, these drugs should only be used under the guidance of a healthcare expert.

## Corticosteroids

Corticosteroids are anti-inflammatory medications that can treat certain hair loss types, such as alopecia areata. Here's what you should know about corticosteroids:

- Corticosteroids can be administered topically, injected into the scalp, or taken orally, depending on the specific condition being treated.
- They work by suppressing the immune response that attacks the hair follicles in conditions like alopecia areata.
- Corticosteroids can help promote hair regrowth in some individuals, but the response can vary, and results may not be permanent.

### Antifungal Medications

In some cases, fungal infections of the scalp can contribute to hair loss. Antifungal medications may be prescribed to address these infections.

Here are a few essential points about antifungal medicines for hair loss:

- Antifungal drugs treat scalp conditions caused by fungal infections, such as tinea capitis.
- By eliminating the underlying fungal infection, hair growth can often be restored.
- Following the prescribed treatment regimen and taking precautions to prevent re-infection is essential.

### Other Medications

Apart from the medications mentioned above, other treatment options are available for specific types of hair loss. These may include:

- Dutasteride: Similar to finasteride, dutasteride is a medication that inhibits both type I and type II 5-alpha reductase and reduces DHT production. It is primarily used for treating enlarged prostate but may also be prescribed off-label for hair loss.
- Bimatoprost: Originally developed as a glaucoma medication, bimatoprost has been found to promote eyelash growth and is sometimes used off-label for improving hair density.
- Ketoconazole: Ketoconazole is an antifungal medication that also has anti-androgenic properties. It is available as a shampoo and can complement other hair loss treatments.

Please be aware that you should always talk to a healthcare provider before using these medications so they can advise you based on your unique needs and medical background.

## Our Research and Education in Hair Loss

At Atlantis Medical, we are committed to advancing the field of hair loss research and education. Our team of experts actively participates in ongoing research initiatives to enhance our understanding of hair loss causes, mechanisms, and treatment options. We collaborate with leading institutions and stay up to date with the latest developments in the field to provide the best possible care to our patients.

Our research efforts focus on:

- Identifying novel targets and therapies for hair loss treatment.
- Studying the genetic and environmental factors contributing to hair loss.
- Researching the effectiveness and security of new therapies and drugs.
- Enhancing patient education and awareness regarding hair loss prevention and management.

In addition to ensuring that our patients receive the most cutting-edge and potent therapies available, we are happy to contribute to the scientific community's understanding of hair loss.

## Mechanism of Action

It's essential to understand how medications for hair loss work to appreciate their potential benefits. Here's a brief overview of the mechanisms of action for the remedies discussed in this guide:

- **Topical Minoxidil:** Minoxidil increases blood flow to the hair follicles, prolongs the anagen phase, and may stimulate hair growth.
- **Oral Finasteride:** Finasteride inhibits the enzyme responsible for converting testosterone to DHT, thereby reducing DHT levels and its harmful effects on the hair follicles.
- **Antiandrogens:** Antiandrogens block the effects of androgens on the hair follicles, helping to slow down or prevent hair loss.
- **Corticosteroids:** In some circumstances, corticosteroids decrease the immune response that targets the hair follicles and reduce inflammation.
- **Antifungal Medications:** Antifungal medications eliminate scalp fungal infections that can contribute to hair loss.

Understanding the mechanisms of action can provide insights into how these medications can address specific causes of hair loss and help determine the most suitable treatment options.

## Lifestyle Changes

In addition to medication, specific lifestyle changes can support hair health and potentially slow down hair loss. Here are some tips:

- Hair development is aided by eating a healthy, balanced diet that is high in vitamins, minerals, and proteins.
- Avoid hairstyles that pull on the hair and cause tension or breakage.
- Protect your hair from excessive heat and harsh chemicals using appropriate styling tools and products.
- Manage stress levels through relaxation techniques, exercise, or other stress-reducing activities.
- Avoid smoking and consume alcohol in moderation, as these behaviours might harm the health of your hair.
- Protect your scalp from excessive sun exposure by wearing a hat or using sunscreen.

While lifestyle changes alone may not reverse significant hair loss, they can contribute to overall hair health and complement the effects of medication.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. Do hair regrowth pills work?

Hair regrowth pills can be effective for some individuals, depending on the underlying cause of hair loss. It's crucial to remember that outcomes can differ. Not all hair-regrowth supplements are supported by strong scientific research. Before beginning any new drug, speaking with a healthcare provider is advisable.

### 2. Is taking hair loss pills permanent?

The effects of hair loss medications can vary. Some medications, such as finasteride, may require continued use to maintain the benefits. Discontinuing the medication could lead to a gradual reversal of the positive effects. It is essential to follow the prescribed treatment plan and discuss any concerns with a healthcare professional.

### 3. Is it safe to use minoxidil?

Minoxidil is generally considered safe for topical use when used as directed. However, some individuals may experience side effects such as scalp irritation or increased hair shedding during the initial stages of treatment. Suppose you have any specific concerns or medical

conditions. In that case, consulting with a healthcare professional before using minoxidil is advisable.

#### 4. When should you start taking hair loss medication?

The ideal time to start taking hair loss medication depends on various factors, including the cause and progression of your hair loss. It is best to consult with a healthcare professional who can evaluate your individual case and provide appropriate recommendations.

#### 5. Why is my hair thinning?

Hair thinning can have various causes, including genetics, hormonal imbalances, nutritional deficiencies, certain medical conditions, medication side effects, and more. To identify the root reason and create an effective treatment strategy, it is crucial to seek the advice of a healthcare specialist.

#### 6. Is there a difference between male and female hair loss?

Yes, there are some differences between male and female hair loss. Male pattern hair loss typically follows a distinct pattern, starting with a receding hairline and thinning at the crown. In contrast, female pattern hair loss usually involves overall hair thinning without a receding hairline. The underlying causes and treatment approaches can also differ between the two.

For more specific questions and personalised guidance regarding your hair loss concerns, we recommend scheduling an appointment with our hair loss expert, Dr. Vikram Jayaprakash.

### Schedule An Appointment Today!

If you're experiencing hair loss and want professional guidance and treatment options, we invite you to schedule an appointment with Dr. Vikram Jayaprakash, our hair transplant expert. You can reach us at: **Atlantis Medical** Address: Level 2, 148 Glenferrie Road, Malvern, Vic 3144 Phone: 03 9576 1465 Opening Hours: Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 5 pm, Sat-Sun: Closed

Our dedicated team is ready to help you in your hair loss journey and help you regain confidence with practical and personalised treatment options.

Remember, understanding your unique situation and seeking professional advice is the key to finding the most suitable solution for your hair loss concerns.

