

Using Hair Loss Medications after a Hair Transplant – November 2006

Transplanted hair will grow for a lifetime and does not require any medications to start or keep growing.

Some patients will choose to use hair loss medications for the following reasons:

- To slow down the loss of their existing, non-transplanted hair
- To speed up the growth of the transplanted hair to see the final results faster
- To reduce the shedding of existing hair in a transplanted area

Non-transplanted hair

Finasteride (Propecia, Proscar) and Minoxidil (Rogaine) used together or separately can slow down genetic hair loss. This is discussed in more detail in **Other Options**.

Some patients use a combination of hair transplantation and medications. Hair transplants improve hair in thin or bald areas and medications can slow down the loss of thinning hair in other areas. Some will use medications to delay further hair transplants.

Speeding up growth

Minoxidil (Rogaine) lotion pushes hair into the Anagen or growing phase. After a hair transplant, most of the transplanted stubble will fall out in the first few weeks and the follicles will rest for 2 to 4 months before starting to grow a new hair. Minoxidil can shorten the resting phase. From 6-8 months after a hair transplant, patients who use Minoxidil may have more hair than those who don't but a year after a hair transplant you can't tell who used Minoxidil and who didn't.

You can use Minoxidil for as long as you want after a hair transplant. Some people only want to use it short-term. You can start using on the third day after the transplant and continue using it twice daily for the next 3 months. After that you can use it once daily for 2 weeks, then once every other day for 2 weeks, and then stop it. The transplanted hair **will not fall out** after you stop using Minoxidil.

The most common side effects of Minoxidil are redness and scalp irritation. Up to 10% of people who use Minoxidil after a hair transplant stop using it because of side effects.

People who use Finasteride (Propecia, Proscar) before and after hair transplantation may also see faster results but it is less clear whether the transplanted hair grows faster or the existing hair lasts longer.

Reducing Shedding

When hair is transplanted into an area of existing hair, some but not all of the existing hair may be shocked into the telogen or resting phase and the old existing hair may be shed. A new hair will start to grow in a shed hair's place in 2 to 4 months.

It takes 4 to 6 months after a hair transplant for the transplanted hair and the shed hair to be long enough to make a visible improvement. It is possible that hair could look a little thinner in the first few months after a hair transplant before it starts to fill in. The more existing hair in the area that is transplanted the higher the chance that the shedding will be noticeable. (This is part of the reason why Dr. Simmons does not encourage hair transplantation when there is only early thinning.)

If Minoxidil (Rogaine) is used as described above and Finasteride is used around the time of hair transplantation it can greatly reduce shedding and prevent this speed bump on the road to regaining your hair.

If you are considering using medications for any of these reasons, you can discuss it further with Dr. Simmons during your consultation.