

# Propecia

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## What is it?

Propecia (finasteride, now available in generic form!) is a medication that is used to treat male pattern hair loss, or androgenetic alopecia, of the vertex and anterior mid-scalp area. There is no evidence that finasteride works in the treatment of receding hairline.

## How does it work?

Men with male pattern hair loss have an increased level of Dihydrotestosterone, or DHT, in their scalps. Finasteride blocks the formation of DHT, and in this way appears to interrupt a key factor in the development of inherited male pattern hair loss in men.

## How much do I take?

Propecia comes in 1mg tablets, but finasteride comes in 5mg tablets — so to take the appropriate dose, you will need to cut each finasteride tablet into quarters. Taking more than 1mg daily has not been shown to be any more effective, so to maximize the life of your prescription, cut each 5mg tablet into quarters (1.25mg each) rather than in half (2.5mg) or taking a full 5mg daily.

## Where can I get it?

Target or Walmart  
as a 4-month supply for \$9.00

Finasteride 5mg tab #30 Take ¼ tab po qd 3 refills
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or Walmart  
as a 12-month supply for \$24.00

Finasteride 5mg tab #90 Take ¼ tab po qd No refills
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You must pay for this prescription out-of-pocket. Your insurance company will not be billed. If the pharmacy tries to bill your insurance, it will not be covered.

## How well does it work?

It takes time! You will not likely see results until 3 months after starting finasteride. At that time, you may first begin to notice a slowing of hair loss. At 6 months, you may actually begin to see an increase in the amount of hair as you continue to take finasteride daily. If treatment with finasteride has not worked for you within 12 months, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit. If you stop taking finasteride, you will likely lose the hair you have gained within 12 months of stopping treatment.

## What about side effects?

Side effects are uncommon and do not affect most men. In general use, the following side effects have been reported: allergic reactions including rash, itching, hives, and swelling of the lips and face; problems with ejaculation; breast tenderness and enlargement; testicular pain; less desire for sex; difficulty in achieving an erection; and a decrease in the amount of semen. Call our office if you think you are experiencing these or any other unusual side effects.

## Is it only for men?

Although women can develop male pattern hair loss, finasteride is for treatment of male pattern hair loss in men only and should not be used by women or children. Women who are or may potentially be pregnant must not use finasteride, and should not handle crushed or broken finasteride tablets because the active ingredient may cause abnormalities of a male baby's sex organs.

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