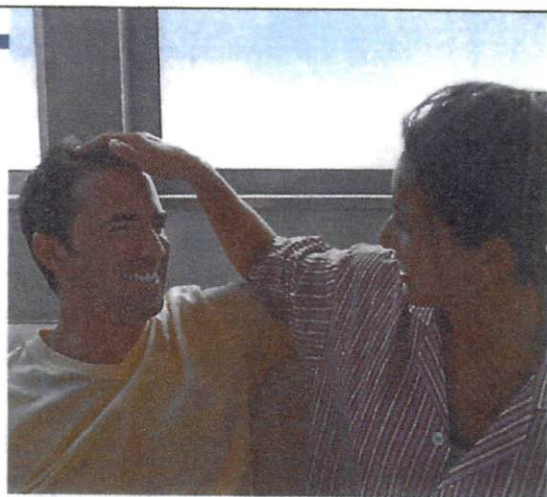


## Get Your Hair Back

### How to Pick the Right Treatment for You

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**M**en who lose their hair can still look great. But some are really bothered by it. And women, who are nearly as likely as men to experience some degree of age- and hormone-related hair loss, are more likely to suffer from feelings of unattractiveness.

If you're losing your hair and it bothers you, here's what you need to know about the latest treatments...

#### MEDICATIONS

■ **Minoxidil Topical (Rogaine).** This treatment is effective for men and women. Studies have shown that it is about 60% to 70% effective at stopping hair loss, stimulating growth and making hair thicker and longer. It works best when started soon after hair loss begins—it will not cause hair growth in areas that already are bald. It causes no serious side effects, although some people may have a little scalp irritation.

*How to use it:* Minoxidil is sold over the counter as a liquid or foam. The newer foam version is less irritating and may be more effective. Men apply it twice a day and women once a day when hair and scalp are dry.

*What to expect:* Most people notice improvement after about two months, with peak improvement after four to six months. You'll need to keep using it—if you stop, hair loss will resume. *Cost:* About \$20 a month.

■ **Finasteride (Propecia, Proscar).** Finasteride, an oral drug sold by prescription, works by blocking *dihydrotestosterone* (DHT), the androgen hormone that causes hair loss in men. The drug was

developed to treat enlarged prostate, and during clinical trials, researchers noted an intriguing side effect—hair growth. It is not FDA-approved for women. Finasteride works best for thinning hair—not on a bald scalp. It is more effective than minoxidil for some patients. Rare side effects include diminished sex drive and sexual function.

*How to use it:* Take one (1-mg) tablet daily.

*What to expect:* Growth may improve within a few months, but it can take up to a year to show the full benefit. You will need to continue the treatment—if you don't, hair loss will resume. *Cost:* \$20 to \$50 a month.

#### TRANSPLANTS

Today's hair transplants are much more sophisticated than the unsightly plugs from the past because hairs are transplanted exactly as they grow naturally, in follicular units (groupings of one to four hairs).

The outpatient procedures are minimally invasive and often can restore a full head of hair (unless you lose more hair in the future).

*How it works:* The scalp is numbed. Follicular units are extracted from areas where there's still hair and then implanted where they're needed using >>

Bottom Line Personal interviewed Ivan S. Cohen, MD, associate clinical professor of dermatology at Yale University School of Medicine and director of the Center for Hair Transplantation in Fairfield, Connecticut. He is board-certified by the American Board of Dermatology and the American Board of Hair Restoration Surgery. [DrCohen.com](http://DrCohen.com)

