



Jeff Donovan MD PhD FRCPC

Dermatologist, specializing in hair loss

750 West Broadway Suite 905 - Vancouver BC V5Z 1H8

Phone: 604.283.9299 Fax: 604.648.9003

Email: vancouveroffice@donovanmedical.com Web: www.donovanmedical.com

INFORMATION ON ANTHRALIN

What is anthralin?

- Anthralin is a synthetic tar-like substance which has been shown to be helpful in some patients with the hair loss condition alopecia areata

How is anthralin prescribed?

- Anthralin is prescribed as an ointment or as a cream.
- Dr Donovan may prescribe a concentration ranging from 0.2 % to 1 %. Rarely higher concentrations (up to 2 %) can be used.

How should I use anthralin at home?

ANTHALIN SHOULD BE USED ONLY AS DIRECTED BY Dr. Donovan

Can I use anthralin with other treatments?

- Anthralin can sometimes be used with other treatments such as minoxidil.
- Dr. Donovan will advise if this is to be done

When will I see results if the anthralin is helping?

- Hair growth can be seen in about 8-12 weeks, but can occur as early as 5 weeks.
- White colored hair may appear first followed by darker hairs

How effective is anthralin?

- In about 50 % of patients with alopecia areata occurring in patches, anthralin can be helpful
- For patients with *alopecia totalis* (total loss of scalp hair), anthralin is helpful in about 25 % of patients

What side effects are possible?

- Anthralin temporarily **stains the skin** (and hair) a yellowy-brown and permanently stains clothing fabrics.

To minimize staining, patients should be advised to apply the medication wearing plastic gloves and to use old sheets and nightclothes.

- Anthralin may cause **burning and irritation**. Anthralin can be very irritating to normal skin and must be applied only to affected skin
- Anthralin may cause enlarged lymph nodes (also called '**swollen glands**') in the neck
- Anthralin may cause **blisters**
- Anthralin may cause severe **itching**

What side effects should prompt me to STOP anthralin?

- Stop anthralin if you have any reaction that you are worried about.
- In many cases it's possible to simply stop the anthralin for a few days if severe itching or blistering occurs

Remember – some moderate amount of redness, scaling and itching is a good sign. This means the anthralin is working and gives the right conditions to grow hair.

The amount of redness, scaling and itching should never be severe

