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INFORMATION ON DIPHENCYPRONE (DPCP)

What is DPCP?

- DPCP is a liquid chemical which is applied to the scalp. It is used mainly as treatment for the hair loss condition known as alopecia areata
- DPCP is used to cause irritation and an allergic response on the scalp.
- This “tricks” the immune system into mounting a response against the chemical rather than against the hair. This gives the hair a better chance to start growing back.

How is DPCP prescribed?

- The very first dose is usually a 2 % solution which is applied to a small coin-shaped area on the scalp. It should be covered to protect from light. The scalp can be washed at the end of the day.
- When the patient returns for the second treatment in two weeks, a very low dose of DPCP is applied (0.0005%).
- When the patient returns in one week, he or she is asked if there was any burning, itching, or irritation with the last dose. If not, the dose is increased to 0.001%.
- If there was significant itching, burning or irritation, then the dose is kept the same and perhaps even lowered
- In general, patients should be itchy for 2 days – the day of treatment and the following day. We do not want patients itchy for the rest of the week.

DPCP Treatment Ladder

- The following is the treatment ladder for applying DPCP. This may vary from center to center
 - 0.0005 %
 - 0.001 %
 - 0.005 %
 - 0.01 %
 - 0.02 %
 - 0.05 %
 - 0.1 %
 - 0.2 %
 - 0.35 %
 - 0.5 %
 - 0.75 %
 - 1 %
 - 1.5 %
 - 2 %
 - 2.5 %
 - 3 %

Can I use DPCP with other treatments?

- DPCP cannot be used with topical steroids. Ask Dr. Donovan if you are not sure what a topical steroid is. You might have been using this for your alopecia areata in the past, but it must now be stopped
- DPCP can be used with Minoxidil lotion –either 2 % or 5 %
- DPCP can sometimes be used with other medications Dr. Donovan will prescribe if he feels it might be beneficial

Who should not use DPCP?

Dr. Donovan will not prescribe DPCP if

- You have a history of a severe reaction to it in the past

When will I see results if the DPCP is helping?

- Hair growth can be seen in about 12 weeks, but can occur earlier
- If you have active alopecia areata, you may have hair loss before you get hair growth
- White colored hair may appear first followed by darker hairs

What side effects are possible with DPCP?

In general, you should think of DPCP like you would think of “poison ivy”. Any reaction you can get with poison ivy you can get with DPCP.

- Rash on the scalp – (this is expected)
- Swollen lymph nodes (swollen glands) on the neck – this is expected and not serious
- Full body rash if the DPCP is spread
- Blisters on the scalp or body
- Pigmentation changes on the scalp – some areas lighter and some areas darker

What should I also know about DPCP?

- It should not be used in pregnancy and should not be used if breast feeding

What side effects should prompt me to STOP DPCP and get medical advice?

- Stop taking DPCP and get medical help if you develop hives, shortness of breath, swelling in the lips or feel unwell
- Stop if you have any concerns at all

