



## **Jeff Donovan MD PhD FRCPC**

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# **INFORMATION ON FINASTERIDE FOR WOMEN**

## **What is Finasteride & how does it work?**

- Finasteride is an oral medication (pill) that is used for treating hair loss. It is approved by the FDA and by Health Canada for men.
- Finasteride is prescribed for women's hair loss by physicians around the world. However, it is not formally FDA approved nor Health Canada approved for women's hair loss. Its use for women's hair loss is called an "off-label" use. Finasteride is commonly used for the treatment of post menopausal androgenetic alopecia as well as frontal fibrosing alopecia and fibrosing alopecia in a pattern distribution
- Finasteride reduces the levels of the hormone dihydrotestosterone (DHT).

## **Does Finasteride help with hair loss?**

- The 1 mg dose of finasteride that men use does not appear to help women.
- Women require 2.5 mg and sometimes even 5 mg to achieve a benefit to their hair. Therefore, typically a 5 mg pill is prescribed and women either take the whole pill or cut the pill in half

## **How long does the drug need to be used?**

- Finasteride only works while it's taken.
- If finasteride is stopped for women with androgenetic alopecia, the benefits are lost in 6-9 months and hair density goes back to the way it was before starting the drug.

# INFORMATION ON FINASTERIDE FOR WOMEN

## What are the side effects of Finasteride for women?

- Mood changes (anxiety & depression) in 1:150 to 1:100
- Decreased libido (sex drive)
- Enlargement of breast tissue and sometimes breast tenderness
- Finasteride is not typically used by pre-menopausal women. Finasteride would seriously harm a baby if a female user were to get pregnant
- Weight gain
- Changes in Blood Counts
- Muscle pain (and increased muscle enzymes such as CK in the blood)
- Hot flashes in perimenopausal women.
- Fatigue

## IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Finasteride is prescribed by doctors around the world for post-menopausal women with various types of hair loss. Your pharmacist might not know this and may question why you are receiving this medication.
- You cannot donate blood while taking finasteride. If a pregnant woman were to need blood, the presence of finasteride in the donated blood could harm her pregnancy.

At Donovan Medical, it is very important to us that you understand the benefit as well as potential side effects. Please initial beside each of the following to indicate that you have reviewed these issues with Dr. Donovan. **I understand and acknowledge that :**

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride dosing is different in women than men. I understand that men use 1 mg, but I may need up to 5 mg of the drug for my hair loss.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride may be associated with mood changes such as depression (approx. 1 % of users) and possibly other symptoms like anxiety and memory problems and 'brain fog'

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride may be associated with sexual side effects, including decreased libido.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride may be associated with enlargement of breast tissue and breast tenderness

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride may be associated with weight gain in some users.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride has rarely been associated with permanent and long lasting sexual dysfunction in men. It has not been reported in women to date.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride users should not donate blood

\_\_\_\_\_ : Women of childbearing potential should not handle broken (crushed) finasteride tablets

\_\_\_\_\_ : Finasteride users should do regular breast exams to check for lump. I understand that at present there is no definitive evidence to link finasteride with breast cancer.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Should I develop side effects from finasteride I am to contact Dr. Donovan

\_\_\_\_\_ : I have received a copy of the Finasteride Information Sheet (page 1).

\_\_\_\_\_ : I understand that periodic follow up is needed for all users of finasteride to determine if ongoing use of the medication is a good idea. Generally speaking an appointment with Dr Donovan is needed every 6-12 months for users of finasteride. If other medications are also being use, this could mean the frequency of follow up is sooner than 6-12 months.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE (DAY/MONTH/YEAR)

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SIGNATURE