



## **Jeff Donovan MD PhD FRCPC**

*Dermatologist, specializing in hair loss*

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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 reduces the levels of the hormone dihydrotestosterone (DHT). Individuals with genetic hair loss develop hair loss on account of the action of 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, a 5 mg pill is typically prescribed.

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

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

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

- Mood changes (anxiety & depression) in 1:150
- Decreased libido (sex drive)
- Difficulty concentrating (rare)
- Enlargement of breast tissue and sometimes breast tenderness – rare
- Finasteride can not be 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)
- Hair shedding

### **IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

- Finasteride is prescribed by doctors around the world for post-menopausal women with hair loss. Your pharmacist might not know this and may question why you are receiving this medication.
- You can not 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.

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## Finasteride Consent

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 has rarely been associated with permanent and long lasting sexual dysfunction in men. However, I understand that this has not been reported in women to date.

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ : Women of child bearing 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 will contact Dr. Donovan

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

PLEASE SEND MY SCRIPT TO: