

## **6 Disturbing Facts about Propecia, the Hair-Growth Product Used by Donald Trump**

**By Amelie Graen**

In addition to the orange color of his skin, a white-gold head of hair is one of the distinguishing marks of U.S. President Donald Trump.

The source of that abundant hair, however, is not his good genes. His physician, Harold Bornstein, recently revealed the secret of Trump's mane to the American newspaper The New York Times: Propecia, a hair-growth product with the active ingredient finasteride, fuels his patient's dense locks.

But before all men cursed with thinning hair run to the pharmacy, they need to be aware that using this hair-growth remedy could be damaging.

According to the daily newspaper Die Welt, since 2011 more than 1200 people have filed complaints with manufacturer the Merck Group concerning Propecia, which appears to have numerous serious side effects.

### **1. The active substance can cause erectile dysfunction**

A few years ago, U.S. researchers showed in a study that finasteride can cause erectile and ejaculation disorders. Even a small dose is enough to do damage.

The latest research was conducted by scientists from Northwestern University. The terrifying result: every hundredth finasteride user develops permanent erectile dysfunction. The reason: finasteride changes the hormonal balance in the body. It prevents the conversion of testosterone into dihydrotestosterone, which affects the hair roots and influences the growth of the prostate, reducing the effect of the sex hormone testosterone, and affecting the libido.

### **2. Finasteride triggers breast growth**

According to the medical magazine Praxisvita, when men take Finasteride, they can grow breasts, due to an altered hormonal balance, called gynecomastia. Many patients confirm this on Internet forums. Possible growth of the chest is mentioned in the package insert of the drug, along with other rare side effects like dizziness or weight changes.

### **3. Severe depression is a possibility**

Several studies show that the use of finasteride can lead to depression, as reported by medical newspaper, Good Pills, Bad Pills. In some cases, the symptoms disappear three weeks after discontinuing use of the drug. In other cases, however, they persist after three months.

In the United States, a foundation is fighting for the rights of patients who have been affected by this drug: the Post-Finasteride Syndrome Foundation. The son of founder John Santmann, Randy Santmann, died in 2008 at age 22. He suffered from severe depression. His family is convinced that Propecia caused the depression. Now, through their foundation, they warn other people of the risks of this drug.

### **4. The effects can be permanent and non-treatable**

Many patients affected by the drug's adverse effects gather in Internet forums to report and discuss other side effects, such as muscle wasting, digestive troubles, skin irritation and inability to concentrate. Many of these side effects are evidently permanent – and untreatable. According to the Northwestern study, by the time men notice these side effects, it might be too late; they can continue long after patients have stopped taking the pills.

## **5. Women should under no circumstances take the medication**

For men, Propecia could be risky. Due to hormonal issues, women should never take the drug. Pregnant women could endanger their baby's health. In addition, the hair-growth agent is ineffective in women, according to the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery.

## **6. The medicine is prescribed too easily**

Apparently, not all doctors are aware of the dangers of Propecia – or do not take it seriously – and both primary care physician and skin specialists prescribe it too easily. Last year, according to the marketing research company, IMS Health, the producers sold 16 million Euros worth of the drug.

Considering the serious side effects, this is a tough choice. No head of hair in the world should be worth risking one's health. And as the case of Donald Trump proves, beauty is always in the eye of the beholder. Whether that yellow, shiny hair wave makes the American president look prettier is a different question.