

*Editor's note: This English translation was done by a third party. The original digital story can be accessed [here](#).*

**This Hair-Loss Drug Has Strong Side Effects**  
**Affecting the hormonal balance to stop hair loss can't be healthy, can it? Read how dangerous finasteride is.**

**By Philipp Wehsack**

Some of the promises of finasteride might make you skeptical because it just sounds so simple: Take one tablet a day and your hair loss will stop. Even better: Your hair will grow back. Too good to be true.

But there is a catch with this miracle pill: Every day, you are taking a drug that interferes with your hormonal balance. I beg your pardon? That's also how we reacted.

To understand how finasteride works in your body and if it can be taken without harming your health, we consulted Dr. Désirée Hölscher, dermatologist and hair expert at the renowned dermatological center in Hamburg.

What is finasteride and how does it work?

The active ingredient influences the male hormonal balance. When finasteride is ingested, less dihydrotestosterone (DHT) is produced from testosterone. DHT is responsible for the development of male sexual organs in children, but also the growth of body hair. Later in life, it can also cause hair loss. "DHT shortens the growth phase of the hair until ultimately the follicles die off. The result: thinned-out hair," explains Dr. Hölscher. She adds: "By taking Finasteride, the production of DHT is blocked. Hair loss stops and hair density can increase." We have put together more information about hair loss [here](#).

Patience and perseverance are prerequisites for success because it can take a few months for the effect to become visible. "The first positive effects can be expected after three to six months. The active ingredient shows results in 90 percent of all users." The big catch: the drug has strong side effects. And that's why it's not one of the first drugs recommended by Dr. Hölscher.

What side effects does finasteride have?

Finasteride requires a prescription and may only be taken after intensive consultation with a doctor. These are some known side effects:

- Erectile dysfunction
- Loss of libido
- Depression with suicidal thoughts
- Chronic pain
- Sleep problems and lack of sleep
- No blood may be donated

"That's why a Red-Hand-Letter was issued for the drug in 2018. Every patient must be thoroughly informed about these side effects. Finasteride is not one of my first recommendations because of the possible known side effects. If a patient absolutely wants to take finasteride, he has to sign a form saying he has been informed about the side effects and that he's willing to accept them," says Dr. Hölscher.

Tip: As an alternative without serious side effects, the hair expert recommends the use of minoxidil preparations that are applied externally to the scalp. The Regain men's foam (from € 60.91) with five percent minoxidil reactivates inactive hair roots and thus supports the formation of new hair.

### What happens if I stop finasteride?

As soon as finasteride is discontinued, the hair loss resumes. It is difficult to generalize whether and how quickly any side effects will decrease. Sometimes they persist even after you stop taking the drug.

Experts suspect that the drug permanently damages the hormonal balance and therefore causes imbalanced mood, which can ultimately lead to persistent psychological problems. Erectile dysfunction can also persist beyond the end of the intake period.

You should think carefully before recklessly taking pills for hair loss on your own. The chances of success are high, but so is the risk of persistent side effects. We think it's not worth it. There are lower-risk remedies like minoxidil and hairstyles you can use to mask hair loss. You can find a few good examples [here](#).