

ANSM
Oct. 1, 2022

Information for Patients: Finasteride 1 mg (Propecia and génériques) for hair loss

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

General Information

Finasteride 1 mg (Propecia or generics) is used in certain less advanced forms baldness (androgenetic alopecia) in men ages 18 to 41. Finasteride inhibits the transformation of testosterone into dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a hormone that can reduce hair regrowth and reduce its volume. Its effects usually appear 3 to 6 months after starting treatment, and fade often 6 months after stopping treatment. In a study of more than 1,000 patients suffering from mild to moderate baldness, 65% of patients improved on finasteride, and 37% on placebo, after one year of treatment.

Like all medicines, finasteride can cause side effects that you need to know before starting treatment. During consultation with your doctor, do not omit any of your medical history (diseases, anxiety disorders, depression), nor of your current treatments, as these could call into question the prescription of the finasteride with regard to its adverse effects. It is also important to be able to discuss alternatives to taking finasteride.

Finasteride is a long-term treatment, so give yourself a period of reflection before starting treatment.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF FINASTERIDE?

Sexual disorders

By preventing the production of DHT, which is mainly responsible in humans for the development of sexual characteristics (hairiness, muscle mass), as well as reproductive organs, finasteride may induce undesirable effects. Patients have reported sexual disorders. These may include erectile dysfunction, ejaculation problems, testicular pain and/or decreased libido. It is possible that these effects persist for an indefinite period after discontinuation of treatment.

Psychiatric disorders

Mental disorders can also appear during treatment with finasteride, such as anxiety, depression, and/or suicidal thoughts that may lead to suicide. All of these disorders can have an impact on your social life.

OTHER SIDE EFFECTS OF FINASTERIDE

Other side effects may also occur during treatment with finasteride. You will find the complete list in the drug leaflet. However, you must watch out for the following side effects:

- allergic reactions such as hives and itchy skin;
- an increase in breast tenderness and volume.

Very rarely, breast cancer has been observed in men treated with finasteride. However, it has not been confirmed to date that finasteride is responsible for this cancer.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IN CASE OF SIDE EFFECTS?

If your mood changes (feeling sad, anxious, tired, difficulty concentrating), stop the treatment yourself and consult your doctor. In the event of the appearance of sexual disorders or any other undesirable effect, report it promptly to your doctor. At that point, you will be able to discuss again with him the opportunity to continue or permanently stop this treatment.

If you have any of the following symptoms: swelling of the lips, face, tongue or throat; difficulty swallowing or breathing, you should stop taking the medication and contact emergency services immediately (15 or 18), as it may be an allergic reaction that may progress to anaphylactic shock.

HOW LONG DO THE SIDE EFFECTS LAST?

The time to onset of adverse effects during treatment with finasteride is variable, from a few days to a few years after the start of treatment. The duration of side effects also varies greatly from patient to patient. The undesirable effects may persist after discontinuation of treatment and in some cases for an indeterminate period.

Medications containing finasteride 5 mg also exist. They are indicated in the treatment of symptoms related to the enlargement of the prostate. You should never take finasteride 5 mg for hair loss.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FINASTERIDE

Consult the [finasteride file](#) on the ANSM website, or scan this QR code.

A VIDEO TO HELP REPORT SIDE EFFECTS OF FINASTERIDE

Consult the [video](#) in the dedicated ANSM file, or scan this QR code.