

# Huge News: Finasteride Works for Hair Loss in Women – Yes, Women!



## Dr. Sharon Orrange

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It has been known for more than 15 years that [Propecia \(finasteride\)](#) at 1 mg/day is an effective treatment for male pattern hair loss. The huge bummer was that 12 years ago [Propecia](#) was found to be ineffective for female pattern hair loss. Well, some researchers didn't give up on [finasteride](#). As mentioned in my previous blog (<https://www.goodrx.com/blog/2012/04/12/propecia-for-hair-loss/>) the trick here is that [Propecia](#) is really just [finasteride](#), a medication that has been around forever as a generic used for benign prostatic hypertrophy at 5 mg/day. So how would [finasteride](#) 5 mg work on women with hair loss? Well, apparently really well.

These recent exciting results showed that oral [finasteride](#) at 5 mg/day proved safe and effective for the treatment of female pattern hair loss in 43 premenopausal women in an 18-month study. Treatment effectiveness was assessed in two ways: patient satisfaction and investigators' evaluation of photographs. Women participating in this study had to be on oral contraceptives so they wouldn't become pregnant.

Because [finasteride](#) works by blocking the conversion of [testosterone](#) to DHT (dihydrotestosterone), which decreases the amount of DHT in the body, you certainly couldn't be on it if you were thinking about conceiving.

Did it really work? At 6 months, 58% of patients characterized their improvement as "huge" and 33% as "moderate." What is also great is that results were stable after 12-18 months. There were a few downsides: diminished libido was reported by 8 patients out of 43, and 4 had nausea or headaches that did resolve.

The current choices for female hair loss are quite dismal—topical 2% [minoxidil \(Rogaine\)](#) and [spironolactone](#) pills—so the fact that this pill has been around forever and is cheap, safe, and effective . . . well that's all good. Stay tuned.

Dr. O.

[Finasteride](#) can be found for under \$10 per month, and is included in many pharmacies' discount generic programs. Most insurance plans consider [finasteride](#) a Tier 1 medication, meaning you'll pay only your lowest copay if it is covered.



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