

Hair Loss Article – Untitled
By Julio Vincent Gambuto

For every hair that goes missing on that queen's crown of yours, there is a myth as to why it split. If you're like most people, you think Mom's genes are responsible for your thinning hair or that wearing a hat made you lose your locks before your time. Not true. In fact, there's been a good deal of progress by the medical community to give us more information than ever about what causes hair loss and what we can and can't do to avoid it, prevent it, re-grow it or replace it. Here are the mane points:

THE FACTS

Hair loss affects over 40 million men in America. Depending on who's doing the math, that's over 4 million gay men with Androgenetic Alopecia, more commonly known as "Oh, sweetheart, you're getting thin up there." Androgenetic alopecia causes the miniaturization of hair follicles, which shortens the growth cycle of a piece of hair, making it shorter and thinner. Over time, the follicle can stop producing hair at all. The condition is hereditary and, in fact, can be passed along from either mother or father, sometimes but not always skipping generations. Bottom line, you can't avoid it. So, if you're not prepared to shave it all off, get up and take some action.

NOW WHAT?

Long after the days when Sy Sperling, Founder of the Hair Club for Men, admitted to us all that not only was he the president of the transplantation association, but a client, treatment for "Oh, sweetheart, you're getting thin up there" has come a long way. Those who want their very own before-and-after successes story have basically four courses of action:

A. Scalp Treatment. Topical scalp treatments like Rogaine are now sold over-the-counter and require twice daily application of the follicle-stimulator monoxidil. Monoxidil, the only FDA-approved topical treatment, rejuvenates shrinking follicles and turns the hair switch back on. But does it work? While studies have shown that upwards of 60% of users (of monoxidil-based products) experience hair re-growth, the key is commitment. Hair is expected to re-grow after at least four months of use, but may thin again 2-3 months after you stop using it. Great for those who don't want to bust their budget, but you've got to make the time to treat your chia head right.

B. A Pill A Day. A quicker, easier, but more expensive solution comes in pill form -- the doctor-prescribed Propecia, the brand name for finestrider. You know the guys that are taking it; they've been on it for years now! But, it's working. Finestrider blocks DHT, a chemical in your body that actually shrinks hair follicles. Because finestrider reduces the amount of DHT, it stops hair follicles from withering away and allows more hair to grow. So, yes, it's much more effective as a preventative hair loss treatment, but many users report noticeable hair re-growth. Again, commitment is key. Stopping your course of finestrider will cause your follicles to pick up where they left off.

C. Both A. and B. When in doubt, all of the above! Combining scalp treatments with DHT-blockers is a comprehensive way to attack from all ends. Most hair loss experts recommend a multi-therapy approach to hair loss treatment, directed by a physician. Extensions of the combo approach include proper diet, exercise and vitamin regimens, even Low Level Laser Therapy (LLLT). Products like the “Laser Comb” use cold lasers (those that don’t release heat) to stimulate hair re-growth. While they have been approved by the FDA for cosmetic use, they haven’t yet gotten the green-light as an official medical treatment.

D. Take a restoration vacation. Huh? There have been great strides in the hair restoration profession in the last decade, as procedures that once insert manufactured “hair” into your scalp have been replaced by high-end, highly specialized micro-grafting transplant surgeries that actually take sections of your scalp that *can* grow hair and surgically graft them to bald spots that *can't*. All in the comfort of resort-like medical centers like that of Dr. Alan Bauman of South Florida. Dr. Bauman is a pioneer in the hair restoration profession and says that taking a “restoration vacation” has become a very available option to those losing hair fast. “Hair restoration was once considered financially out of reach for the average patient, but new techniques have efficiently streamlined the procedure, making it more affordable than ever.” Hey, not a bad option for those who want to skip the scalp and pill regimens, and head down to Boca.