

HAIR LOSS CHEAT SHEET

Take the guesswork out of how effective popular **pills**, **drugs**, **topicals**, and **therapies** are for regrowing hair. Here's what the literature says.

Get the facts (not the fluff) about your treatment options

When weighing your hair loss treatment options, it can feel overwhelming trying to sort fact from fiction (and weed through all the misinformation online).

That's why I've created this cheat sheet. This a **straight-to-the-facts** overview on nine popular "treatments" for pattern hair loss (androgenic alopecia). For each treatment, you'll get the key takeaways on:

- **Mechanism:** how do these treatments actually work?
- **Response rate:** of the people who try this, how many people see a slow, stop, or reversal in their hair loss?
- **Regrowth rate:** what's my expected *increase* in hair count over 6-24 months?
- **Costs:** how much do I need to pay?
- **Problems:** what *aren't* marketers telling me when I actually buy this product?

As you look through these options, notice that all treatments are *very* limited in their upside to hair regrowth... except ones targeting a specific set of mechanisms.

There's a reason for this. It's explained right after the sheet.

Hair loss cheat sheet:

The pros and cons of popular hair loss treatments



Finasteride (Propecia®)

- **Mechanism:** 5-alpha reductase inhibitor
- **Response rate:** 80%+
- **Regrowth rate:** 10%
- **Costs:** \$30/month
- **Problems:** concerns over side effects; hair regrowth contingent upon lifelong use



Minoxidil (Rogaine®)

- **Mechanism:** vasodilation, prostaglandins
- **Response rate:** 30-40%
- **Regrowth rate:** 5-15%
- **Costs:** \$20/month
- **Problems:** efficacy fades over time; hair regrowth contingent upon lifelong use



Low-level laser therapy

- **Mechanism:** vasodilation, heat shock proteins
- **Response rate:** 70%
- **Regrowth rate:** 10-15%
- **Costs:** \$400+
- **Problems:** placebo groups always see hair regrowth; efficacy plateaus after 6 months

Nutrafol®

- **Mechanism:** 5-alpha reductase inhibitor, addresses nutrient deficiencies
- **Response rate:** unknown
- **Regrowth rate:** 10% (women only)
- **Cost:** \$79/month
- **Problems:** not tested on androgenic alopecia (but marketed to androgenic alopecia sufferers); only clinically proven in women (not men); placebo groups also see hair regrowth; likely only helps with hair loss from nutrient deficiencies



Platelet-rich plasma therapy

- **Mechanism:** acute inflammation, growth factors
- **Response rate:** 80%+
- **Regrowth rate:** 15-50%
- **Cost:** \$1,500-\$4,000
- **Problems:** expensive; real-world results often don't match those of studies; similar mechanisms targeted with microneedling; results vary wildly depending on the clinic

Saw Palmetto

- **Mechanism:** 5-alpha reductase inhibitor
- **Response rate:** 10-20% (hair loss rate may slow)
- **Regrowth rate:** 0%
- **Cost:** \$25/month
- **Problems:** doesn't reduce DHT enough to significantly improve hair; weak clinical evidence for androgenic alopecia; likely needs to be combined with other therapies



Standardized massages

- **Mechanism:** acute inflammation, growth factors, muscle relaxation
- **Response rate:** 75%+
- **Regrowth rate:** unknown (anecdotes range from 0% to over 1,000%)
- **Cost:** free
- **Problems:** requires significant effort; lacking long-term studies

Biotin

- **Mechanism:** addresses biotin deficiency
- **Response rate:** 0%
- **Regrowth rate:** 0%
- **Cost:** \$25/month
- **Problems:** popularized by marketers who cite studies on malnourished third-world populations that show a link between a biotin deficiency and hair loss; hair loss from a biotin deficiency is not the same as androgenic alopecia



Microneedling

- **Mechanism:** acute inflammation, growth factors
- **Response rate:** 70-100%
- **Regrowth rate:** 15-40%+
- **Cost:** \$20-200 (device-dependent)
- **Problems:** painful; lacking long-term studies

Why are (almost) all treatments limited to 10-15% regrowth?

It's because male and female pattern hair loss (androgenic alopecia) have a rate-limiting recovery factor: **fibrosis**. This is a fancy term for scar tissue development. As the condition progresses, the tissues surrounding each miniaturizing hair follicle begins to scar – which limits the upside that most (but not all) treatments can provide.

There is an exception: treatments that target acute inflammation generation and growth factors. In other words, therapies like platelet-rich plasma therapy, standardized scalp massaging, and microneedling.

These treatments target pathways that may allow for the *remodeling* (and reversal) of scar tissue. That's why, for many hair loss sufferers, they're unlocking another level of regrowth.

The key is to multi-target (not mono-target) your hair loss with a set of products, therapies, and treatments suited to your needs and preferences. This will maximize your chances for hair recovery.

You can do this in dozens of ways, but the most effective (and robust) plans will also factor in your age, gender, and health history – to address any other catalysts of your specific hair loss case.

These personalized regimens (and guides) are inside our

MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY

