

# Topical Minoxidil

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is this medication for?

This medication is applied to the scalp to promote hair growth and slows down the balding process. It thickens hair strands and prolongs the growing phase of the hair.

The improvement rate varies from person to person. Hair growth is usually observed after the medicine has been used for at least 3 to 6 months and lasts only as long as the medicine is used. Hair loss may begin again within a few months after treatment is stopped.

## How should I use this medication?

- Wash your hands before and after using this medication
- Apply Minoxidil lotion when the hair and scalp are clean and dry. Minoxidil foam may be applied when hair is damp.
- Apply 1ml of the medication to the affected areas on the scalp two times a day (morning and evening), or as directed by your doctor
- It is not necessary to shampoo your hair before applying this medication. However, if you do wash your hair, you may dry your hair with a hair dryer with cool setting after washing.
- Do not use a hair dryer after applying the medication as it will reduce the effectiveness of the medication
- Avoid contact with eyes, nose, mouth, ears or broken skin. Flush the area thoroughly with water if the medication gets into your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Allow the medication to dry completely before you go to bed or applying any hair products (e.g. hair gel, hair mousse). This medication can stain your clothing or bed linen if your hair or scalp is not fully dry after using the medication
- Do not wash or wet your scalp for at least 4 hours after applying the medication for best effectiveness
- Stop this medication for at least 24 hours before and after hair treatment procedures (e.g. hair dye, hair perm) to avoid chemical interactions

## **What should I do if I forget to use this medication?**

If you forgot to apply a dose of this medication, apply it as soon as you remember. Skip the dose if it is almost time for the next dose. Apply your next dose at the usual time. Do not apply two doses to make up for the missed dose.

## **What precautions should I take?**

Inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to the medication or any of the other ingredients of the medication e.g. propylene glycol or ethanol (alcohol).
- You are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding
- You have high blood pressure or heart problems
- Your scalp is inflamed, irritated, infected or sunburned. It should be treated first before using this medication

## **What are some common side-effects of this medication?**

- Scalp irritation, including dryness, scaling, itching and/or redness
  - Decrease the dose or frequency of application
  - Stop the medication and consult your doctor if redness or irritation continues
- Temporary hair loss (this may occur in the first 1 to 2 months of treatment)
  - Stop the medication if this continues for more than 2 months
- Unwanted face or body hair
  - Avoid dripping the medication over the face and forehead
  - You may consider using a lower concentration of the medication
  - If these symptoms do not go away, consult your doctor

## **What are some rare but serious side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?**

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

In rare cases, Minoxidil can be absorbed into the skin and cause these side effects:

- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Headache
- Fast/irregular heartbeat
- Swelling of face, lips, hands or feet
- Unusual weight gain

If you experience any of these symptoms, stop the medication and consult your doctor immediately.

## **How should I store this medication?**

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children.

## How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing into the rubbish chute or bin.

### Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

*This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore.*

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