

Propecia

What is Propecia?

Propecia (Finasteride) is a 5 α -reductase inhibitor indicated for the treatment of male pattern hair loss (Androgenetic Alopecia) in men only. Propecia is available in generic form.

Propecia's active ingredient, Finasteride, effectively blocks the hormone responsible for male pattern baldness, a common genetic form of hair loss. However, numerous studies suggest that it can also have damaging effects on a man's sexual health, including decreased sex drive, erectile problems and a decreased volume of ejaculation.

What are the Side effects of Propecia?

- Impotence
- Loss of interest in sex
- Trouble having an orgasm
- Abnormal Ejaculation
- Swelling in your hands or feet
- Swelling or tenderness in your breasts
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Feeling like you might pass out
- Headache
- Runny Nose
- Skin Rash

The sexual side effects of Propecia may continue after you stop taking it. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about these side effects. Propecia may also cause decrease in blood prostate, specific Antigen (PSA) levels and can affect PSA blood test.

- Erectile dysfunction
- Ejaculation disorder
- Decreased libido

Fact:

Concern for potential sexual side effects grew when young men began taking Propecia to treat hair loss.

But when the FDA approved Propecia for hair-loss treatment, younger men began taking Finasteride and concern of potential sexual side effects grew. This is because younger men were “much less likely than older men with enlarged prostates to already have underlying sexual dysfunction,” according to a Washington Post report.

In 1998 — about one year after Propecia hit the market — more than 1,500 men between the ages of 18 and 41 participated in two, yearlong trials, in which they received either Propecia or a placebo. Researchers discovered 4.2 percent of men treated with Propecia reported sexual dysfunction, compared with 2.2 percent of men given a placebo.

“Because this trial was designed to study the hair-restoring qualities of Finasteride, and the assessment of sexual side effects does not appear to have been rigorously conducted, the extent of the side effects may very well have been underreported,” Daniel Marchalik, a urologist at the MedStar Washington Hospital Center in D.C., wrote in the Washington Post report.

Persistent Sexual Side Effects:

A **2003 study funded by Merck** gave one of the earliest indications that the sexual side effects of Finasteride may continue even after men stop using the drug. In the first year of treatment, 15% of men taking Finasteride for an enlarged prostate reported sexual side effects. Researchers said side effects later resolved in 50% of men, and the group with persistent sexual complications received no follow-up.

The 2003 study concluded that the problems were most likely caused by factors unrelated to the drug. This claim was challenged in 2011, when George Washington University urologist Michael S. Irwig and his colleague Swapna Kolukula, published an assessment of 71 Finasteride patients who reported long-term sexual side effects that persisted after discontinuation of the drug.

The selected group of patients (young men between the ages of 21 and 46) took a survey that revealed a wide range of sexual side effects that arose after Propecia use, including problems with erectile function, arousal, sexual desire, orgasm and orgasm satisfaction. These side effects appeared slowly and persisted for an average of #40-months after the end of treatment.

Side effects that appeared because of taking Finasteride persisted for an average of #40-months after the end of treatment.

Upon following up with #51 of these patients one year later, Irwig discovered that 96% of the men were still suffering from the sexual dysfunctions they initially reported. None of the men reported sexual, psychiatric or medical complaints before taking finasteride.

By 2012, the FDA published results from its own investigation into the adverse effects of Finasteride. Using data collected from 1998 to 2011, this study identified persistent sexual dysfunction of at least three months in 14% of the #421- evaluated cases.

More recently **in March 2017**, a Northwestern Medicine study found that men who take Finasteride can get persistent erectile dysfunction in which they will not be able to have normal erections for months or years after stopping Finasteride. The study evaluated data from 11,909 men for persistent erectile

dysfunction. Eligible men were 16 to 89 years old and had at least one clinical encounter and one diagnosis from January 1992 to September 2013.

Of the men studied, 1.4 % developed persistent erectile dysfunction that continued for an average of about 1,350 days after stopping treatment. Men 41 years old and younger who had more than 205 days of exposure to Finasteride or to the related drug Dutasteride had nearly five times higher risk of persistent erectile dysfunction than men with shorter exposure.

FDA Strengthens Propecia Side Effect Warnings:

The FDA required Propecia's label to include a warning about an increased risk of high-grade prostate cancer.

Between 1998 and 2011, the FDA received more than 420 reports of sexual dysfunction in Propecia users. Nearly 60 men reported side effects that lasted longer than three months after they stopped using the drug, including erectile dysfunction, decreased libido, problems with ejaculation and orgasm disorders. More than 250 cases involved semen quality associated with Propecia.

In 2011, the FDA required the drug's label to include information about incidences of male breast cancer, an increased risk of high-grade prostate cancer and the potential of erectile dysfunction after stopping the drug.

Then in April 2012, the FDA required revisions to the Propecia label to include libido disorders, ejaculation disorders and orgasm disorders that continued after discontinuation of the drug, as well as a description of reports of male infertility and/or poor semen quality that normalized or improved after drug discontinuation.