

MODERN MANAGEMENT OF MALE HAIR LOSS

The latest ways to counteract thinning follicles.

Male pattern hair loss, the most common form of hair loss in men, and its causes are well understood by medical scientists. Treatment options have improved significantly in recent years, says Dr Russell Knudsen, who runs hair-loss clinics throughout Australia. Dr Knudsen is not just considered an Australian hair-loss expert, his work is also highly regarded internationally.

Male pattern hair loss (balding) is a genetic condition, inherited from either or both sides of the family, and it begins after puberty due to the influence of adult levels of male sex hormones.

In male scalps, each and every hair follicle is "coded" for a certain amount of 5-alpha reductase activity. Curiously, balding males inherit more of this enzyme in the upper-scalp follicles than in the lower-scalp follicles. This initiates a shrinking process in the hair follicles in the upper scalp, continuing until, eventually, most are lost. The crucial factor in the successful management of male pattern hair loss is early blocking of the enzyme. This is best achieved with finasteride, a prescription medicine (dutasteride, another hair-loss medication, may also be effective). Medications such as these are much more effective in stopping or slowing hair loss than they are in regrowing hair. Some patients in the early stages of thinning can successfully regrow stronger hairs but this occurs in only approximately one third of these patients. By contrast, continued hair thinning will stop for more than 80 per cent of patients who use finasteride regularly.

If either finasteride or dutasteride (which any doctor can prescribe) is used as the primary medication, additional treatments can be added if desired. For example, the next most successful option is minoxidil lotion, which is a hair stimulant that can strengthen existing hair and slow future loss.

What can be done, however, for the man who is balding and who wants hair regrowth? Unfortunately, the only solution for regaining a significant amount of healthy hair in the upper scalp is a hair transplant.

Modern hair transplantation, however is highly successful. It involves the transfer of tiny grafts containing one to three hairs (follicular unit grafts) from the healthy lower scalp to the balding area. These hairs are coded to be "non-balding" so they survive in the bald areas and continue to grow healthy hairs. The use of natural hair groupings ensures that a properly designed and executed hair transplant is undetectable. Fortunately, unnatural-looking plug transplants are a thing of the past. Most of Dr Knudsen's hair-transplant patients continue to use medication following the transplant in order to prevent future hair loss. This greatly reduces the likelihood of further hair transplants being required down the track.

Men who undergo hair transplants constantly tell Dr Knudsen that they have more self-confidence and that even their hairdresser doesn't know.

For further information, call **Dr Knudsen's clinics** on 1800 685 399 (Australia) or (09) 522 0705 (New Zealand). Alternatively, log on to www.treathairloss.com.au



Hair-loss specialist Dr Knudsen

BEFORE TRANSPLANT



AFTER TRANSPLANT



Actual patient: Results may vary from person to person.