

MEN'S JOURNAL



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EXPERT ADVICE

Bald Science: New Options for Men Losing Their Hair

For years, men who were losing their hair had only one option: commit to a daily combo of Rogaine and **Propecia** for life and hope for the best. Those who were already balding could spend a small fortune on plugs, shave their heads, or, well, deal with it. Nearly 50 million men have hereditary hair loss, and according to the **American Academy of Dermatology**,

half of all guys will develop the condition by the time they're 50.

So why don't we have a solution for going bald? "Keeping hair on all heads is a tall order, because it's not just fixing hormones, or genetics or nutrients — the process of hair growth is a multifunctional cycle of growth, loss and regrowth, and it's a different cycle for each individual," says Dr. Paul Jarod Frank, a dermatologist in New York City. And while there's still no magic pill to suddenly transform a bare head, there are cutting edge innovations that doctors say could keep the hair you do have, and bring some follicles back to life.

Going Off-Label

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You may have heard of **Latisse**, an RX-only wonder-liquid that takes the eyelashes of its primarily female fan club to thick, Bambi-like lengths. Now researchers are looking to harness the ability of its active ingredient, bimatoprost, to create new strands on the scalp. Currently, the only FDA-approved topical treatment is Rogaine (and why it's been the gold standard for 17 years), which "contains a growth factor that keeps strands in an active-growth phase for longer," says Leavitt. Great for keeping the hair you have, not so effective at getting more of it. A Latisse for the scalp "could potentially be the biggest topical breakthrough for hair loss since Rogaine — but far more effective, and the logical next step," says Frank.

Allergan, the makers of Latisse, are starting a second round of clinical trials now to aim to get an FDA-approved version to market (some doctors put the timeline at around two years from now). In the meantime, dermatologists have found another solution: use the current Latisse off-label. Frank says he often tells patients to apply the eyelash-growing cream to their scalp — Frank goops it on his own thinning hair — though it's a pricey option; the tiny tubes of lash-sprouting Latisse only contain some 3 ounces of formula. "For now, it is an expensive endeavor for those willing to experiment," he says. "But the fact that we know it works is huge — it's just a matter of getting similar results for a formula for the scalp."