Finasteride

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

**Brand Names: US**
Propecia; Proscar

**Brand Names: Canada**
ACH-Finasteride; ACT Finasteride [DSC]; AG-Finasteride; APO-Finasteride; Auro-Finasteride; DOM-Finasteride; JAMP-Finasteride; MINT-Finasteride; PMS-Finasteride; Propecia; Proscar; RAN-Finasteride; RATIO-Finasteride [DSC]; RIVA-Finasteride; SANDOZ Finasteride; SANDOZ Finasteride A; TEVA-Finasteride; VAN-Finasteride [DSC]

**What is this drug used for?**
- It is used to help hair growth in male pattern baldness. It may take 3 months to see the full effect.
- It is used to treat the signs of an enlarged prostate. It may take a few months to see the full effect.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

**What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?**
- If you have an allergy to finasteride or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
• If you are a woman. This drug is not approved for use in women. If you are a woman using this drug, talk with your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding.

This drug may interact with other drugs or health problems.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

**What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

**For all uses of this drug:**

• Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.

• Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.

• To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly if you have been sitting or lying down. Be careful going up and down stairs.

• This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.

• Do not donate blood while using this drug and for 1 month after stopping.

• Some doses of this drug may raise the chance of a type of prostate cancer. Talk with your doctor.

• Rarely, male breast cancer has happened with this drug. Talk with your doctor.

• This drug may lower sperm counts in men. This may affect being able to father a child. Talk with the doctor.

• Pregnant women must not handle crushed or broken tablets. Talk with the doctor.
For enlarged prostate:

- Have a rectal exam (to check prostate gland) and blood work (PSA test). Talk with your doctor.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- A lump in the breast, breast pain or soreness, or nipple discharge.
- Enlarged breasts.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Low mood (depression).
- For males, testicle pain.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- This drug may cause a change in sex ability in men or lowered interest in sex. This could go on after you stop this drug. Talk with your doctor if these effects go on or bother you.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about
side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?
Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- Take with or without food.
- Take this drug at the same time of day.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store in the original container at room temperature.
- Protect from light.
- Keep lid tightly closed.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.
General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.

- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

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- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.