

# give me a head of hair

## Where to Turn When Your Hair Starts to Thin

by Risë Birnbaum

**Y**our hair is thickest at around age 20, but it's downhill from there. Men, women, animals—we're all fair game for hair loss. The game plan is to keep it on your head for as long as you can. For a long time, the dreaded comb-over was everyone's last resort. But don't pull out your hair in frustration. There are some new hair-saving procedures, medicines and devices that can help thicken the thin places.

### The Head Doc

Dermatologists and plastic surgeons see men and women with a range of hair-thinning problems and have a variety of medically proven fixes. Dr. David Orentreich of the Orentreich Medical Group in New York City, one of NYC's first families of dermatologists, says male pattern hair loss in men—and female-pattern baldness in women—is common.

"Though women usually have more diffuse hair loss, with thinning on the sides and the back and not as much on top, there is good news," says Dr. Orentreich. "Once an evaluation is made to determine the cause, we can proceed on either the medical or surgical front, or both, with some real success."

Non-surgical remedies include the medicine Propecia, an oral medication that reduces the level

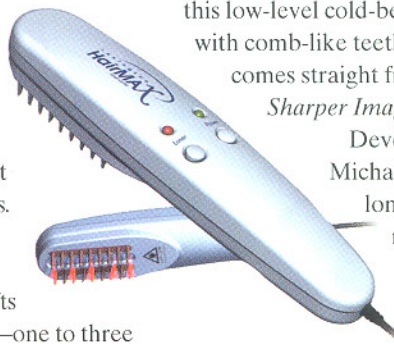
of hormone that triggers hair loss, or minoxidil, applied topically and known by brand name as Rogaine. Dr. Orentreich feels that minoxidil offers "minimal effectiveness," but can still be used in some cases. Another thing to know about minoxidil: If it works for you, you need to use it daily for life. Some folks who use minoxidil swear it's not only kept the hair at their temples from receding, but has also filled in bald spots.

On the surgical side, Dr. Orentreich says, "the state-of-the-art in hair grafts is very small grafts of hair—one to three hairs—called micro-grafts which result in a much more natural-looking hairline." (Instead of those rows of hair implants that look like an Iowa farmer just seeded and watered your head.) These micro-grafts are planted into thinning areas as close as possible. And if you guys decide to move towards a close-cropped hairstyle with maybe a touch of a beard (à la Apolo Ohno), you can go from shut-in to clubber in no time.

The surgery is generally a half-day procedure under local anesthetic and can cost between \$3,000 for the "frontal peaks" to more than \$5,000 for more coverage, though costs vary depending on surgical group.

### Hair to the Max

If you're just starting to thin and have a ways to go before you get real serious about surgery, medicine, weaves or extensions, you might consider the HairMax LaserComb. Dubbed as one of the "new inventions" in *Time* magazine, this low-level cold-beam laser with comb-like teeth looks like it comes straight from the pages of *Sharper Image*.



The Hair Max Laser Comb stimulates hair follicles.

Developer David Michaels, who credits his long, beautiful hair to regular use of the LaserComb, says the "laser energy stimulates your hair follicles for thicker, healthier hair." You need to use the LaserComb twice a

week for five to ten minutes on a clean scalp (wet or dry) by laserling one section at a time for several seconds and then moving the device over your entire head. Michaels boasts, "You'll start seeing a difference within 12 weeks, and can use this in tandem with Propecia or Rogaine."

HairMax LaserComb has already complied with FDA product safety regulations as a cosmetic device and is undergoing trials as a full-blown hair-growth product. You can buy the LaserComb for \$645 if you feel like combing your way to thicker and healthier hair. ●

### Orentreich Medical Group

Dr. David Orentreich  
212-794-0800  
orentreich.com

### HairMax LaserComb

David Michaels  
866-527-3726  
hairmax.com