

## Thinning hair? This doctor-recommended treatment is your secret weapon

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It sounds too good to be true, but according to two doctors, there's a reason Rogaine has been a best-seller for decades. (Photo: Getty Images)

Much like taxes and death, hair loss is one of those things that we can't escape. It happens to everyone, men and women alike.

And while it may seem far-fetched that a topical foam can help stop the loss and spark hair growth, there's one product out there that actually works. It's the answer to all our prayers: Yes, we're talking about Rogaine.

It sounds like one of those products that's too good to be true, but according to two doctors, there's a reason it's been a best-seller for decades — and it all happened by accident.

Researchers discovered— by accident— that minoxidil, the active ingredient in Rogaine, could help regrow hair. “Minoxidil was originally studied for high blood pressure,” **Gary Goldenberg, MD**, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital, tells Yahoo Lifestyle. “During one study, it was discovered that some of the patients grew hair.” Minoxidil was then turned into a solution and later a foam designed to be applied directly onto an area of hair loss, Goldenberg explains.

### How does Rogaine work, exactly?

There are a few different ways that it works to combat hair loss, California dermatologist [Cynthia Bailey, MD](#), tells Yahoo Lifestyle. In general, there are four key things it does:

- It increases blood flow to the area where it's applied.
- It stimulates resting hair follicles to switch them into the hair growth phase.
- It elongates the growth phase before a hair follicle rests again, leading to longer hair.
- It reverses the shrinkage process of hair follicles that parallels their progression from producing hair to no longer producing hair.

While doctors know that this is what Rogaine does, “the exact mechanism of how minoxidil accomplishes this is uncertain,” Bailey says.

# Men's Rogaine 5% Minoxidil Foam for Hair Regrowth, 3-month Supply



Men's Rogaine 5% Minoxidil Foam for Hair Regrowth, 3-month Supply. (Photo: Walmart)

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## Does it really work?

“Absolutely,” says Dr. Goldenberg, “but not for every patient.” Bailey agrees. “It does really work for some people, but it doesn’t for others,” she adds.

Rogaine seems to work best in the crown (aka back) of the scalp, but less well in the front of the scalp, Goldenberg says. When someone starts Rogaine also matters. “Patients whose hair loss has progressed do worse,” he says. “It’s best to treat it as early as possible.” Once you get past a certain point, “non-surgical options won’t work ... and hair transplant is the only option,” Goldenberg says.

## How do you use minoxidil and measure results?

Goldenberg recommends looking for a formula that’s five percent minoxidil (which Rogaine is). To use it, apply Rogaine to the area where hair is thinning or lost, twice a day. “I have patients massage it down to their

scalp skin with their fingertips, being certain to cover the entire area with the manufacturer's recommended dosage," Bailey says.

## Women's Rogaine 5% Minoxidil Foam for Hair Regrowth 4-Month Supply



Women's Rogaine 5% Minoxidil Foam for Hair Regrowth, 4-Month Supply. (Photo: Walmart)

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Bailey recommends using [Rogaine](#) for four months and then checking to see if you have new short hairs or just a reduction in loss. If you're not sure, give it another four months. If shedding increases in the weeks to months after you stop using [Rogaine](#), this suggests that the minoxidil was working and those hairs were dependent on it.

If you start to notice hair thinning or baldness and it's bothering you, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor. There are many reasons why hair loss can develop, and it could be a sign of an underlying health condition.

### Bottom Line

Ultimately, there's really no reason not to start using minoxidil if you notice hair thinning or even if you're just worried about it, Bailey says. "Twice daily application for life is inconvenient, but the side effects are minimal," she says. "There is very little to lose by trying to slow or prevent the process."