

DPCP

Patient Information

What is DPCP?

DiPhenylCyloPropenone (**DPCP**) is a chemical that is applied to the scalp in order to treat hair loss due to **Alopecia Areata (AA)**.

AA is a condition that causes patchy hair loss to any part of the body that grows hair. No one really knows what causes **AA** but the best evidence suggests that it is an autoimmune disorder. This means that your immune system mistakenly thinks your hair is foreign and is attacking it as it would any other invading force. As a result of this attack, the root of your hair becomes disabled and the hair falls out.

How does it work?

Essentially, **DPCP** acts like a decoy; drawing your immune system's attention away from your hair, allowing your hair to grow again. The immune system stops attacking your hair in order to focus on the **DPCP** because it sees the **DPCP** as more of a threat. The **DPCP** creates a minor allergic reaction on the skin, similar to eczema or dermatitis. You will know that the **DPCP** is working when your scalp becomes itchy. This is sometimes accompanied by dry, flaky skin and redness.

Before you begin treatment you need to know that...

1. **DPCP** is an experimental chemical and it is not approved by Health Canada therefore, **ONLY** specially trained Registered Nurses or Dr. Shapiro will apply it. It is a clear liquid, which is swabbed on to the skin using a large cotton "Q-tip".
2. **DPCP** has side effects, some or all of which you may experience. These include itching, dry flaking skin, severe eczema, blistering, lightening or darkening of the treated skin and enlarged lymph nodes. Side effects will be dealt with on an individual basis as they arise.
3. You will be required to sign a consent form prior to treatment that states that you understand the risks mentioned above.
4. Women of childbearing age must use a reliable method of contraception, as the effects of **DPCP** on a fetus are not known.
5. This is a weekly treatment. Therefore you must commit to coming in to Dr. Shapiro's office once a week.
6. **DPCP** does not work for everyone. Depending on the duration and extent of hair loss **DPCP** is successful in

approximately 17-70% of patients, depending on the extent and duration of your **AA**.

7. **DPCP** is not the only way to treat **AA**. Please speak with Dr. Shapiro about other treatment options and their associated risks.

8. **DPCP** is not a cure for **AA**. It is only one method that Dr. Shapiro uses to assist you in re-growing your hair. You will find that you go through periods of remission, when you will grow more hair. At other times, even with treatment, you will find you lose some or all of your hair again. This is normal when dealing with **AA**.



Now you are ready to begin:

- On your first visit you will be sensitized to the **DPCP**. This means that a small amount of the strongest dose of **DPCP** will be applied to a small area of your scalp. This initial dose allows your

immune system to prepare for regular exposure to **DPCP**.

- You should leave the **DPCP** on your scalp for 48 hours. You should keep your scalp/hair covered with a hat or scarf for the two days, as the solution can break down with exposure to light. Once the 48 hours are up please shampoo your scalp to ensure the solution is completely removed.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the **DPCP** is not transferred from your scalp to other parts of your body or to someone else's. Try to avoid touching your scalp for the 48 hours that the **DPCP** is on your scalp. If you or someone else accidentally touches your scalp, simply wash the area with plain soap and water as soon as possible.
- On your next visit, one week later, we will apply the lowest strength of **DPCP** to half of your scalp. The strength of the **DPCP** will then be increased on a weekly basis until you experience an itch (eczema) to the treated side. If you find during the 48 hours after treatment, that your scalp becomes too itchy, is burning or blistering, WASH THE DPCP OFF EARLY. More is not better in this case. A slight TOLERABLE itch is sufficient to be effective.
- Once you reach a dose that produces an itch (eczema), Dr. Shapiro will write you a prescription for the **DPCP**. Not all pharmacies can fill this prescription so you will have to go to one of the three pharmacies listed on the back of this pamphlet. You will be required to buy this medication and bring it into the clinic for application by the nurse. DO NOT apply this medication at home. It

is not for self-application and you will be deemed inappropriate for this treatment if you are found to be doing so.

- Initially only half of your head will be treated with the **DPCP**. By doing this, we may be sure that you are growing hair due to the **DPCP** and not simply because your **AA** is in remission. Once it is clear that you are growing more hair on the treated side of your head than the non-treated side, your entire head will be treated.
- Most people will see some hair growth after 3 months of beginning treatment (with regular weekly clinic attendance). Other people respond slower. It may take as long as 6-9 months to see hair growth. If you have not had any hair growth within one year of beginning treatment, it will be assumed that you are not going to respond to this particular treatment. Dr. Shapiro will discuss your other treatment options with you at that time.
- For the first year after you begin treatment, regular weekly attendance is recommended. If, after that first year, you find that you have been able to maintain good hair growth we can consider lengthening the time between your treatments. You might be able to stop treatment for a long time if your condition goes into remission.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. I have to miss one or two week(s) of treatment. Will I lose my hair again?

No, missing the odd treatment will not cause your hair to start falling out again. Let's face it, you have a life beyond your hair and sometimes you just can't get in for treatment. That's okay; however, remember that you will find the treatment more effective if you attend regularly for at least the first year. Keep in mind your **AA** can flair up at any time despite treatment, causing increased hair loss again.

2. Can I safely dye my hair while having this treatment?

Yes, but please keep in mind that your scalp is going to be more sensitive to chemical exposure because of the treatment. Do not dye/perm/straighten your hair during the 48 hours while the **DPCP** is on your scalp. If your scalp is particularly sensitive you may want to skip treatment the week that you have dyed your hair.

3. What else can I do to help my hair grow back?

By seeking out this treatment and attending the clinic regularly you are doing what you can. Speak to Dr. Shapiro regarding all treatment options for **AA**.

Pharmacy Information



Your **DPCP** prescription can be filled at the following pharmacies:

Skin Care Centre Pharmacy

835 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4E8
604-875-4331
Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm

Royal Oak Drugs

6440 Royal Oak
Burnaby, BC V5H 3P2
604-434-5121
Mon-Fri 9am to 6pm
Sat 10am to 3pm

Macdonald's Prescriptions

746 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1G8
604-734-4311
Mon-Fri 8:30am to 6pm
Sat 9am to 1pm

If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment please contact the clinic:

Dr. Jerry Shapiro

835 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4E8
604-875-5151

www.skincarecentre.ca

Prepared by:
Judy Wiggin, RN, Hair Clinic Nurse

