

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/practical-dermatology/hair-regrowth-and-choosing-your-device/26994/>

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Hair Regrowth and Choosing Your Device

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Well, red light therapy is considered to be one of the staples for hair regrowth when it comes to androgenic alopecia. The reason for that being is there's no one great treatment for androgenic alopecia. There's a lot of things that people are doing, whether you're doing minoxidil, finasteride, dutasteride. Every single thing that we do, there's not one mainstay treatment for it. And because of that, when a patient comes to me with androgenic alopecia and they're like, "Oh, doc, I'm losing my hair. It's thinning," we have to do everything that we can to help increase and restimulate the hair growth follicle to start becoming thicker and saving the hair, quote-unquote.

I kind of explain it as a plant. What ends up happening is when you have a plant and you water it really well, it thrives; the leaves are a light, luscious green. But if you let the plant sit in a dry area and you're not really promoting it or watering it, for that matter, what ends up happening is it starts drying out, it becomes cracky, the roots start dying out. And I kind of explain hair loss like that. I'm like, "What's happening is the DHT hormone is blocking off the testosterone receptors on the hair follicle, and what it's doing is it's causing the blood supply to the hair bulb to decrease. That's why your hair is thinning out."

But if we're able to stimulate hair follicle growth, if we're able to re-stimulate the blood supply to that area, we can actually make it grow back again with the particular hair follicles that are already present. We can't make new hair grow back, but just the ones that we have right now that are, quote-unquote, dying off like the plant, we can help re-stimulate it to grow back again. And red light therapy really plays a great role in that because it does stimulate hair follicles and it does improve scalp health as well, too, because it helps with the anti-inflammatory processes that might be occurring around a hair follicle at that time.

So while a colleague asks me, "How do I choose the right PDT device?" It's a very loaded question at the time because what I'm trying to find out is, "OK, what will work for your practice and for your workflow? How will it work for your patients?" So what I try to advise them is, "We want to look for a machine that's versatile. We want to be able to see if the panels are adjustable higher or lower, and they're just not fixed in one particular shape, and you're moving this huge machine around and you're trying to angle it around the patient and everything." That is not versatile enough for treating effectively the lesions that you're trying to target at the time.

So what I would tell them is, "Try to look for a panel that offers red light and blue light because each one has its own advantages. And try to look for panels that are easily able to maneuver around the patient chair and as well as on the patient, depending on the treatment area that you're doing. Whether you're going to target the face, you want to target the neck, the chest, the arms, the hands, the lower legs, how do you get a machine that will be able to help you maneuver in your establishment and be able to effectively come closer to the patient and be able to treat the intended target that you're trying to take care of at the time?"