

# PROSCAR (Finasteride)

WHY is this drug prescribed?

Proscar (prah-scar) is indicated for the treatment of benign prostate enlargement in those patients that are showing signs of obstruction of urinary flow. After age 50, most men develop some enlargement of their prostates. The prostate is located below the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it may slowly restrict the flow of urine. This can lead to symptoms such as:

- \* a weak or interrupted urinary stream
- \* a feeling that you cannot empty your bladder completely
- \* a feeling of delay or hesitation when you start to urinate
- \* a need to urinate often, especially at night
- \* a feeling that you must urinate right away and surgical removal of the enlarged prostate gland.

## **How does Proscar work?**

Proscar shrinks the enlarged prostate gland in most men. This can lead to gradual improvement in urine flow and symptoms over the next several months. However, since each case of BPH is different, you should know that:

- \* Even though the prostate shrinks, you may NOT see an improvement in urine flow or symptoms.
- \* You may need to take Proscar for six months or more to see whether it helps you.
- \* Even though you take Proscar and it may help you, it is not known whether Proscar reduces the need for surgery.

## **WHEN should it be used?**

One 5 milligram pill should be taken every day before breakfast. The pill is blue colored and apple shaped.

## **What SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS should I follow while using this drug?**

Proscar should be taken indefinitely. Most patients will see an improvement in urinary flow by three to four months.

The improvement may increase throughout the first 12 months. The drug should be continued to maintain the benefits. Some patients ( reports suggest about 3 out of 10 ) will

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NOT derive any benefits from Proscar. If after 6-8 months, no improvement has occurred, consideration for discontinuing therapy should be made. Store the medication in a cool, dry and dark place.

**What should I do IF I FORGET to take a dose?**

Take it as soon as you remember on the day forgotten. If the day was omitted, then take only that days dosage. Do not double the dose.

**What SIDE EFFECTS can this drug cause?**

A very small percentage (2-4%) of patients will notice a decrease in quality of erections (impotence), sex drive (libido), and decreased amount of ejaculate. No apparent side-effects with other drugs are felt to be significant. No other drug dosages need to be modified. Proscar can affect the PSA blood test for prostate cancer. Usually the PSA falls by 50% or so. You will need to establish a new baseline PSA for future reference. There may be some preliminary data that suggests that Proscar may protect against the development of cancer of the prostate. This is NOT confirmed yet, and is not a guarantee that prostate cancer will not occur later on. You will need to be seen on a yearly basis to have a rectal examination and PSA blood test drawn.