

Consumer Alert: Avacor and Folliguard Products

Posted by : admin on Oct 10, 2007 - 08:03 PM

Consumer Alerts

Folliguard is gaining a bad reputation for business practices and legitimacy in treating hair loss. September 23, 2002

A new breed of snake oil treatments is on the market today, including names such as Avacor, Hair Advantage, and most recently... Folliguard. The peculiar thing about these treatments is that they use a play on words to make the sale, mixing both legitimate ingredients, pointless ingredients, and a hefty price tag... So you turn on the radio one day and hear about a revolutionary new treatment "Clinically Proven" and "FDA Approved" for treating hair loss. Guess what? They're not lying. What they fail to tell you is that the product contains Loniten, which is just another name for Minoxidil - and if you want it, you're going to have to pay over \$100 for a single month's worth. Minoxidil - something you can get at Costco for \$15 per month. That is why these companies are so dangerous.

This alert is focused primarily on a product named Folliguard. Yet another treatment touting FDA approval and clinical proof, but deceiving the public by not admitting its just a very expensive bottle of Rogaine.

We here at HairlossTalk have received *so many* inquiries about Avacor, Folliguard, and Hair Advantage that we thought it was time the facts were revealed. This article just released by ABC News and Good Morning America covers the Folliguard issue quite well.

Folliguard or Fooliguard?

Though it was described in a television commercial as "the revolutionary new breakthrough scientifically formulated to stop excessive hair loss and re-grow new hair," more than one person has been completely unimpressed with the results. Folliguard avoided all comments...

"Didn't work," Krainok told Good Morning America. "Nothing."

Balding men are the traditional target market for the \$1 billion a year hair growing business that is bursting with products promising to give back what nature has taken away. But 40 percent of the 60 million Americans experiencing hair loss are women, and now they, too, have become a target market for products that promise to treat baldness.

FolliGuard, a new hair formula that costs \$359 for a three-month supply, is proving to be an equal opportunity letdown, customers told Good Morning America. After an investigation, GMA learned that the only ingredient in the formula that is proven to work on balding is an ingredient that can be purchased a lot cheaper at the drugstore. Plus, dissatisfied customers were having problems getting their money back.

'Good Hair Day' Quest

FolliGuard is marketed to both sexes on TV and radio, and in publications that have mostly female readers.

Kim Farrand was worried about her thinning hair, fearing that she would become one of 24 million women who experience some degree of female pattern baldness.

"I would never find a boyfriend if I was half bald," Farrand said. "It's hard enough to find one as it is when I'm educated and independent and nice and I've got to have a good hair day going along with that."

She paid more than \$200 for FolliGuard's guaranteed system of vitamins, shampoo, herbal tablets, and a "topical activator," but said she felt let down by the results. After using FolliGuard, she says her hair did not get thicker as she had hoped.

"As a matter of fact it seemed to be falling out," Farrand said.

Company Declines Comment

Despite repeated requests for a television interview, no one at Jungle MD, the Biddeford, Maine-based company that sells FolliGuard would talk on camera to Good Morning America about the "revolutionary hair growing formula." Jungle MD president Chris Austin did not return calls or respond to a letter, and when a correspondent and crew visited company offices, someone called the police to have them thrown off the premises.

GMA producers ordered a three-month supply of FolliGuard Extra from Jungle MD, for \$359. When the product arrived, they saw that one of the main ingredients of the "...scientifically advanced ...revolutionary new formula..." was minoxidil, the same over-the-counter drug found in Rogaine, a baldness treatment product which has been around for years.

One doctor said that the company appears to be using a new tactic to sell what he described as "snake oil."

"This is a new technique that, that is being used to sell products that I used to refer to as snake oil because they didn't work, but now they have minoxidil so now there's snake oil with minoxidil," said Dr. Michael Reed, a hair loss expert at New York University Medical Center.

Only Two FDA-Approved Ingredients

The Food and Drug Administration is in charge of making sure hair regrowth products are safe and effective. The FDA says only two drugs are proven safe and effective for growing hair. One is minoxidil, and the other is a prescription drug sold under the brand name Propecia, which is only approved for men, as one of the active ingredients may cause a specific kind of birth defect. But even these two drugs are limited. They don't work for everyone, and they don't work on all areas of the head. Both are far better at maintaining the hair you still have rather than re-growing new hair on your bald spot.

Minoxidil works as a baldness treatment, but Reed says the Jungle MD Web site is exaggerating when it says minoxidil is "proven to rejuvenate hair growth in more than 90 percent of people who use it." In fact, as FolliGuard notes in the fine print on its own packaging, clinical studies show only 26 percent of users get moderate to dense re-growth.

To the best of his knowledge, none of the FolliGuard ingredients, with the exception of minoxidil, can re-grow hair, Reed said.

FolliGuard claims another ingredient, saw palmetto, is also "clinically proven to encourage hair re-growth," but the experts who Good Morning America spoke to dispute that claim.

The cost of FolliGuard is also prompting questions.

"That's a big rip-off quite frankly, economically speaking, because you can buy minoxidil for \$15 a month, you know, generically in any pharmacy and it'll do the same thing as, as, as what FolliGuard does," Reed said.

Money Back Guarantee?

The words "risk-free" and "guarantee" appear six times in one FolliGuard print ad, and in the TV commercial, the announcer says, "It's the answer you've been waiting for. Guaranteed, call now!"

But Krainock said he was not able to get his money back, despite the product's money-back guarantee.

"I didn't get anything back at all," Krainock said.

Farrand had the same problem.

"They had a money-back guarantee that they refused to honor," Farrand said.

Bob Williams, of the Better Business Bureau, in Eastern Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont, said that guarantees can be risky.

"The money-back guarantee is only as good as the company giving it," Williams said.

The Better Business Bureau says Jungle MD has an unsatisfactory record, and a pattern of complaints it has failed to correct, including "failure to deliver product, failure to honor on a timely basis, or honor at all, money back guarantees."

Farrand said that if she could sum up her experience with a phrase, there is just one.

"Taken advantage of," she said.

- Legitimate Proven Treatments for Men: Overview

- Legitimate Proven Treatments for Women: Overview

HLT