

Longer Eyelashes Possible With New Medical Treatment

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(PhysOrg.com) -- As far back as Cleopatra, long eyelashes have had an aesthetic appeal, with the only way to achieve this look being the use of cosmetic products that temporarily give the appearance of thicker or longer lashes.

But achieving longer, thicker lashes is more than just cosmetic. Eyelashes form a protective barrier to prevent debris from entering our eyes and people suffering from hypotrichosis (insufficient growth) of the eyelashes could benefit from medical treatment.

Diya Mutasim, MD, UC Health dermatologist and chair of the dermatology department at the University of Cincinnati (UC), says that a newly approved medication might be a viable option for cosmetic reasons, hypotrichosis patients, and for cancer patients suffering [hair](#)

loss due to chemotherapy or radiation.

The topical treatment—a bimatoprost ophthalmic solution that is applied to the roots of the eyelashes much like eyeliner—prolongs the growing phase of the eyelash, says Mutasim. Marketed as Latisse by Allergan, Inc., it is available only by prescription.

As Mutasim explains it, hair passes through three cyclical phases: anagen, catagen and telogen. At the end of the catagen phase, the hair breaks off or falls out. One phase is followed by another and the cycle continues.

This treatment prolongs the anagen phase, he says, adding that "the hair now has twice as long to keep growing."

This same solution is used on the ocular surface to decrease [eye pressure](#) in glaucoma patients, says UC Health dermatologist and UC assistant professor Ann Neff, MD. When it is used on the eye surface, she says, some patients have experienced darkening of their eye color, but this side effect has not been reported with use on the eyelid.

Possible side effects include skin darkening, eye irritation, dryness of the eyes and redness of the eyelids.

The lash lengthening treatment is currently prescribed specifically for use only on the upper eyelid, at the base of the eyelash.

What the treatment cannot do, both dermatologists say, is create new hair follicles.

A professional dermatologist can treat many hair problems and thus can suggest the right treatment for preventing hair loss.

Provided by University of Cincinnati

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