



Laser helmet could bring back helmet of hair

KUSA -

The average adult sheds about 100 hairs a day. The problem for many is that those hairs never come back.

Thirty five million men in the United States have male pattern baldness and a lot of them are looking for solutions.

There is a new procedure that may hold some promise and it involves heavy concentrations of laser light.

It is the same kind of light used in healing therapy for many of diabetics. There are several theories about how it works, but no one really knows for certain.

What is clear in many of those cases is that the diabetic patients grew new hair where the lights were applied.

Therein lays the science of this new device.

The machine itself looks like something right out of Star Trek. It is the Sunetics Advanced Laser Therapy System.

When 52-year-old Geoff Fowler used it, his head lit up like a blast furnace. He says he does not care; he just wants a new head of hair.

"I guess it's what you got used to. Yourself, growing up all those years and all of sudden having it taken away from you is kind of a cruel joke," Fowler said.

He is actually hoping for just the hair on the crown of his head to come back.

"I feel self-conscious about it because people, when they talk to me, their eyes wander up," he said.

Does the laser therapy hurt?

Dr. James Harris of the Hair Sciences Center in Greenwood Village is the first in Colorado to use the device and says there is no pain involved.

"Certainly no adverse affect from it, no heat or anything like that. But a little tingling is normal," he said.

You may remember the "laser comb." It was a consumer sensation just after the first of the year, despite a \$400-to-

\$700-dollar price tag and some other drawbacks. You had to pull it across your scalp for 20 minutes every other day.

"I've had some patients complain that using the comb gets a little tedious for 20 minutes at a time," said Harris. "Your arm gets tired so you tend not to do the 20 minutes."

The new "laser helmet" also really ramps up the power. It has about 10 times the juice of the comb.

"The laser combs have either five or 10 small laser diodes, where this in-house unit has 107," Harris said.

As to the science behind it, it is all about the laser light.

"This wavelength has been shown to be absorbed by the follicles preferentially, and when those follicles absorb that energy, it allows them to increase their metabolism," explained Harris.

Some in the medical community believe the laser helmet has yet to show it can work. Dr. Michael Maloney of Cherry Creek Dermatology is among them.

"People have been trying to treat baldness literally for centuries and there have been thousands and thousands of devices and creams and lotions and potions that come out to treat hair loss. Some of them don't work very well and some of them end up being dangerous," Maloney said.

For those who want to try something different, something that does not include the difficult surgical option of hair transplants, Harris says the laser is attractive.

"So many people that I see are hesitant to try either surgical therapy or medical therapy because of the possible side effects," he said.

The full treatment will last from 44 to 48 weeks and after that, you must continue with some additional tune-ups every three months or the hair will stop regenerating. Each treatment takes about a half hour, but it varies depending on how large of an area of the scalp is getting the treatment.

The cost of the program is a one-time price of \$3,500-to-\$4,000 for the lifetime of the treatment.