

hair growth inhibitor

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Hair Growth Inhibitor

Lotions and sprays claiming to slow hair regrowth after removal. This is the mirror image of [Hair Growth Serum](#), and it has the same structure: **the thing that works is a prescription drug, and the cosmetics are making a claim they cannot support.**

The regulatory line, first

Under FD&C Act sec. 201(g), a product intended to affect the **structure or function of the body** is a drug. **Hair growth rate is a function.** Therefore:

- **"Slows hair regrowth", "inhibits hair growth", "reduces hair over time"** -> a **drug** claim. A cosmetic making it without an approved application is an **unapproved new drug** and is also **misbranded**.
- **"Skin feels smoother for longer", "hair appears finer"** -> cosmetic claims, and legal.

Reading which vocabulary a bottle uses tells you what the company believes it can defend.

What actually inhibits hair growth

Treatment	Status	Evidence
Eflornithine 13.9% cream (Vaniqa)	Prescription drug in the US	Genuine. It irreversibly inhibits ornithine decarboxylase , an enzyme required by the hair follicle, slowing growth. Approved for unwanted facial hair in women. Works while used; hair returns on stopping
Laser and IPL hair reduction	Medical device / clinical procedure	The best-evidenced long-term reduction. Targets melanin in the follicle; works best on dark hair and lighter skin, though modern long-pulse Nd:YAG systems work safely on darker skin
Electrolysis	Clinical procedure	The only method that is genuinely permanent removal rather than reduction
Antiandrogens — spironolactone, oral contraceptives, finasteride	Prescription drugs	For hirsutism with a hormonal cause
Soy and lupin extracts, papain, isoflavones, "hair minimisers"	Cosmetic	Weak. In-vitro plausibility, small manufacturer-linked studies, no convincing clinical demonstration

Eflornithine is the honest answer for facial hair where a prescription is appropriate, and **laser is the honest answer** for long-term reduction elsewhere. A cosmetic lotion costing a fraction of either and claiming a comparable result is the thing to be sceptical about.

Why regrowth seems slower anyway

Two effects flatter these products and neither is the product's doing:

- **Waxing, sugaring and epilation remove the hair from the root**, so regrowth takes two to six weeks and returns with a **soft tapered tip** rather than the blunt cut end a razor leaves. Hair genuinely feels finer. That is the removal method, not the lotion.
- **Repeated waxing over years** does thin regrowth for some people, through follicular trauma. Again, not the lotion.

Someone waxing regularly and using an inhibitor will observe both, and attribute both.

The part that matters more

Sudden or excessive hair growth is sometimes a medical sign. New coarse terminal hair on the face, chest or abdomen in a woman — **hirsutism** — can indicate polycystic ovary syndrome, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, an androgen-secreting tumour, or a medication effect. It is worth a clinician's assessment rather than a cosmetic, because the underlying condition may need treating on its own account.

Where it sits in the rules

Cosmetic in the US — FDA primary category **(13) shaving preparations**, overlapping with (14) skin care — **only** for products with appearance claims. **Eflornithine is a prescription drug.** FDA and the FTC have both acted against unsupported hair-reduction claims.

Under MoCRA, facilities register, products are listed, safety substantiation records must be held, and

serious adverse events are reportable within 15 business days.

In the EU, the **Common Criteria** under Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 require cosmetic claims to be supported by verifiable evidence, and a growth-inhibition claim would face that test directly.

Shelf life

12 months after opening for a cosmetic lotion. Prescription eflornithine carries a printed **expiration date** and it should be respected.

Stop at any increase in redness, itching or burning — applied to freshly waxed or shaved skin, these products meet a compromised barrier, and contact dermatitis is the common adverse outcome.

Related

- [Shaving and Hair Removal](#) — the shelf this sits on, and the rest of it.
- [Cosmetics](#) — what the label is legally allowed to say, and the full catalogue.
- The rest of *Depilation* — [Depilatory Cream](#) · [Wax Strips](#) · [Hard Wax](#) · [Sugaring Paste](#) · [Post-Wax Oil](#) · [Ingrown Hair Serum](#).
- [Hair Growth Serum](#) — the same argument, in the opposite direction.
- [Health and Wellness](#) — where hirsutism belongs.
- Regulatory statements here follow the FDA and EU sources listed on [Cosmetics](#), read 16 August 2026.