

Home-Use Devices Offer Benefits to Both Patients and Physicians

By Bob Kronemyer, Associate Editor



HairMax LaserComb

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By offering users privacy, convenience and results, home-use devices are gaining popularity. To help ensure that only FDA cleared home-use devices are used in treatment, and for proper uses and indications, Lexington International (Boca Raton, Fla.) feels that physicians should personally recommend or prescribe these products to their patients proactively, rather than having the patient find a product on his own.

"Physicians should take an active role in the use of these devices and schedule follow-up visits and evaluation sessions to ensure that the device is being used correctly and that expected results are achieved," said Leonard Stillman, director of professional services at Lexington International (Boca Raton, Fla.), which manufactures the HairMax LaserComb for hair regrowth in people with androgenetic alopecia.

Such a strategy provides a value added service to the patient and in many cases increases the number of office visits required to achieve therapeutic goals. "The patient is seeing value beyond a simple prescription when devices are actively added to treatment regimens," Mr. Stillman said. Patients also appreciate the fact that they are able to perform the therapy at home, and at their own convenience. "However, it is important that patients are instructed by a medical technician in the office, so that they have a full understanding of how to use the device effectively at home," he said.

As an example, the HairMax LaserComb is used on certain classes of androgenetic alopecia for promotion of hair growth. "The physician can educate himself on this device from many sources,

including the professional website or from contact with the professional services department," Mr. Stillman explained. "Then when a patient comes in who is appropriate for therapy, the physician is equipped to fully discuss the HairMax and to decide, with the patient, if the device is appropriate for their therapy. Patients will appreciate the fact that their physician is knowledgeable about the latest breakthrough therapies that have recently become available."

Mr. Stillman believes the reputation of a physician is enhanced when he or she offers home products. "This expertise can lead to referrals from satisfied patients," he said.

Some physicians have set up a medical device room for their patients in their office complex to display a number of devices and view informational video tapes and/or CDs on their use. "The staff works very carefully with patients to show them how these devices are to be used," Mr. Stillman said. "It is a very hands-on approach and part of the value added service."

Integrating home products with an in-office menu can be as simple as prescribing a systemic or topical drug with a home product. "The home product can either be monotherapy or used adjunctively," Mr. Stillman noted. "The goal should be to have the physician in charge of therapy to ensure patient satisfaction in the use of medical devices for optimal results. I also think patients really appreciate the fact that they can control and take charge of their destiny by partaking in the therapy at home. But they don't have the expertise to put it all together themselves – that is the role of the practitioner."