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# Chance side effect creates thick eyelashes, market for Latisse

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By **Janice Lloyd, USA TODAY**

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What's this?

Another drug is getting a second life because of desirable side effects.

Botox was originally approved by the Food and Drug Administration to reduce eye spasms. Then the world realized it also made people look younger by eliminating wrinkles.

Human growth hormone was intended for children with growth disorders, but older people seeking the fountain of youth and athletes wanting a boost started finding illegal suppliers of HGH for muscle growth and overall toning.

The latest development involves Lumigan, a drug Allergan produced to treat glaucoma. The disease can lead to blindness if left untreated. The medication decreases pressure within the eye either by slowing the production of a fluid in the eye or by increasing fluid drainage. One of the side effects of Lumigan is longer, thicker and darker eyelashes.

Allergan developed a spinoff called Latisse, which the FDA approved for eyelash enhancement in December. Lumigan drops are used in the eyes; Latisse is applied to the upper eyelid. Bimatoprost is the active ingredient common to both drugs.

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"Forget about fake lashes, they end up on your cheeks," says Liz Weber of Washington, D.C. "This is my favorite stuff ever."

Weber, 52, was distressed about having short lashes and bald spots, a condition called hypotrichosis. Her dermatologist told her the condition can be persistent after menopause. Weber had used fake eyelashes and was ready to try eyelash extenders when she found out about Latisse.

"Now, my daughter calls them my Bambi lashes," she says.

Dermatologists say customers are lining up. Richard Glogau, a member of the American Academy of Dermatology who practices in San Francisco, says he got his first shipment of 60 boxes three weeks ago and was sold out within a week. A box is a month's supply.

"I had no idea how big eyelashes were with women until this came along," Glogau says. "The response has been impressive. I was a little taken aback at first, but they report that their eyelashes got thinner as they got older or they were too blond."

One of the warnings for both Lumigan and Latisse is possible change in pigmentation of the eyelid and darkening of the iris. Though not harmful, once change of the iris does occur, it is permanent.

Weber's dermatologist, Marilyn Berzin of Dcdermdocs in Washington, D.C., says she believes Latisse is safe and is not likely to alter the iris color because it's not applied directly to the eyes.

Still, Andrew Iwach, a glaucoma specialist and spokesman for the American Academy of Ophthalmology, cautions people who have eye inflammation, glaucoma or macular edema to consult with their eye doctor before using Latisse.



[Enlarge](#) By Robert Deutsch, USA TODAY

Liz Weber wears mascara to enhance her longer, thicker lashes. Weber uses Latisse, which drugmaker Allergan estimates could exceed global sales of \$500 million a year.



[Enlarge](#)

Liz Weber was distressed over her short lashes, which were the result of a condition called hypotrichosis.

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have had chemotherapy and lost their lashes. Their lashes eventually will grow back without Latisse.

The FDA did not approve Latisse for people under 18 or for pregnant or lactating women.

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**NewlyOptimistic** (7 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 13h 16m ago

**ilen25** (8 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 14h 52m ago

**NewlyOptimistic** (7 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 3h 5m ago

So another drug with an unexpected side-effect equals big bucks for the pharmaceutical companies - yet the number of people who die from cancer and other illnesses continues to climb. Pathetic.

What's pathetic is your uninformed, ignorant comment. Do you not think the drug companies are working on new medicine for those disease states? This new medicine was discovered by accident-- they didn't set out to create a drug for this use. Did you not read the article before you posted such a lame statement?

I read the article, yes. Did you read my comment? I did stated "UNEXPECTED side-effect." Lack of eyelashes is not climbing the lives of people every day. Cancer and other illness are. I've watched two friends die (one of whom was a 16 y/o boy who spent the last three years of his life enduring surgeries and treatments for osteosarcoma - bone cancer) because the drugs weren't available or weren't yet approved to treat them. Unexpected side effects like this (and, of course, the holy grail of side-effects, Viagra) translate to major bucks for the pharmaceutical companies, yet people all over the country are still engaging in events like the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure to raise money to develop and test cancer treatments. Billions of dollars have been poured into research, but people are still dying. Sorry, but I think touting a drug that causes thick eyelashes is just ridiculous when people are burying their loved ones every day because they've not been cured. If that makes me pathetic, fine.

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**49** (47 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 13h 49m ago

And some company's insurance plan probably paid for this.

This OBVIOUSLY should be considered ELECTIVE, and insurance shouldn't cover it.

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**Mister Grumpy** (1 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 14h 26m ago

I tried a viagra and shoved it up my nose. The only problem was that I started to look like Ronald Burris.

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**Ed in NM** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 15h 31m ago

Have any of these people tried shoving a viagra in their eyes?

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**Nightangel** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 16h 9m ago

If we aren't bailing out the poor, we are bailing out the vain...I've had enough news for the day....

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**smart-one** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 16h 13m ago

We are a vain nation.

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**NEVER NEVER** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 16h 30m ago  
WOW !

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**uhohcoach2009** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 16h 56m ago  
**The Central Way** (30 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9h 16m ago  
Our work environment is to sit longer at the computer with less time for exercise.

When they get a drug that has a side effect of losing weight, let me know.

Being overweight is the single most relevant factor in so many complications: diabetes, cancer, etc., and our modern workplace isn't getting any more active.

=====

So why do you live at your workplace? If exercise is important to you....you will find/make time. If it isn't you will sit and whine and blame.

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**uhohcoach2009** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 16h 58m ago  
**bmilo56** (7 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1h 18m ago  
It looks like Andy Rooney OD'd on this stuff.

=====

Do you know the difference between eye lashes and eye brows?

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**Mofolnfidel** (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 17h 25m ago  
That explains the local HS football studs calling my 85 year-old Mom!

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