

Types of Feminizing Hormones

1 ESTROGENS

Decrease testosterone production by the testicles, decrease sperm production and erectile function, and increase breast tissue.

Estrogen comes in several different forms – pills, injectables, and transdermal.

Pills taken by mouth tend to be the least expensive form, but also have the most risk for dangerous side effects like blood clots.

Injectable estrogens can offer quicker effects

for some people, but may also increase your risk for some side effects.

Transdermal estrogen patches are considered to be safest but also tend to be the most expensive. They can also cause skin irritations on the part of your skin where you use them.

Risks and side effects of estrogen include: High blood pressure, blood clots, liver problems, diabetes, headaches, changes in cholesterol, nausea, and heart disease.

2 ANDROGEN BLOCKERS

Block the production and action of testosterone in your body, slow down growth of hair on your face and body, help with growth of breast tissue, and can decrease erectile function and sperm production.

The most commonly prescribed androgen blocker is spironolactone. It is a pill that can be taken by mouth.

Risks and side effects of androgen blockers include: Dizziness or light headedness, excessive urination (especially in the beginning of the treatment), can interact with some blood pressure medications, and can be damaging to the kidneys.

Feminizing Hormones





FAQ

Every body is different, and the effects of hormones can vary from person to person. This guide will give you the basics about how feminizing hormones work, what the potential benefits and risks are, how to safely and effectively use hormone medications, and some ideas about what to expect.

1 What are hormones and how do they work?

Hormones are chemicals in your body that influence many of your body's functions and systems. Some hormones, like estrogen and testosterone for example, affect your secondary sex characteristics.

2 What will hormones not do for me?

Hormone therapy for gender transition will not change your voice. Your provider has referrals for resources to find help changing your voice to sound more feminine. Feminizing hormones also will not affect your "Adam's Apple" (the lump in the front of your neck) or the bone structure of your face or body.

3 What feminizing hormones will I take for my transition?

There are two main types of feminizing medications – estrogen and androgen blockers. These medications each work differently, and are taken together to help you look more feminine.

4 How can I decrease the risks of taking feminizing hormones?

Having a healthy lifestyle and taking good care of your body can help reduce some of the risks that come along with feminizing hormones. Staying healthy includes a variety of things like regular physical activity and exercise, cut down or remove smoking or tobacco, eat a healthy diet, limit alcohol use to two drinks or less per day, and get emotional and social support when you need it.

5 What about sex and pregnancy?

Feminizing hormones can affect your ability to have an erection. You might find that erections will be less firm and will not last as long. You will still have sexual sensation and be able to orgasm, but may not ejaculate. Your testicles may become smaller, to less than half their original size. Hormones cause a decrease in sperm production that can be permanent. This means that you may not be able to make a pregnancy, however, feminizing hormones are not birth control. If you want to preserve your fertility, talk to your provider about options for banking sperm before you begin hormones.

What changes can I expect to see?

Everyone is different, the types of changes you see may vary. This depends on many factors including your genetics, age at which you start taking hormones, as well as your overall health. Many people begin noticing changes within a few months of beginning hormones, and can expect to see the maximum effect within 2-3 years. Some of the changes are permanent, and some may not be permanent.

Taking higher doses of hormones will not necessarily make things move more quickly. In some cases, this will actually make your body convert the excess hormones into the hormones we are trying to lower.

You will notice physical and emotional changes as your hormone therapy progresses:

Breast growth

This is a permanent change that you will begin to notice within several months of beginning hormones. You may experience tenderness in your breasts as they are developing, and for many people there is unevenness between the left and right side. The amount of growth varies from person to person, but most people can expect to develop an "A" cup or a small "B" cup size.

Decrease in muscle size

Skin changes

You may find that your skin becomes softer and drier than before. Pores will become smaller and there is less oil production.

Hot flashes & headaches

These side effects sometimes happen when starting on hormones, but often go away within a few weeks.

Changes to body shape

Your may notice changes to body shape and fat may collect more around the hips, thighs, and buttocks. You might also notice that the fat under the skin of your face will increase too.

Moodiness & emotional fluctuations

Your overall emotional state may change. Transition can feel like a second puberty that can be a roller coaster of emotions. Talking with a counselor, therapist or mental health provider can help you explore new thoughts and feelings as you transition.

Changes to body & facial hair

The hair on your body and head will decrease in thickness and grow at a slower rate. Facial hair may thin and grow slower but will not go away. You may choose to undergo electrolysis or laser treatments to help permanently remove hair from your face or body.