

Forms of Testosterone

1

INJECTABLE

Injectable testosterone is the least expensive and provides quicker effects. You can give yourself the injections or have someone else give them to you.

2

TRANSDERMAL

Transdermal forms of testosterone, like skin patches or gels, are more expensive but provide a steady daily amount of medication. They can also cause skin irritations on the part of your skin where you use them. If you are using transdermal testosterone, keep in mind that it can rub off on clothes and bedding and be transferred to other people.

Risks and side effects of testosterone include: changes in cholesterol, high blood pressure, weight gain, infertility, male pattern hair loss, acne, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, liver disease, and polycythemia (increase in red blood cells).

Masculinizing Hormones



HORMONES



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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 masculinizing 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 masculinizing hormones will I take for my transition?

There is one main masculinizing medication – testosterone. Testosterone is available in several forms and your provider will talk with you about which form is best for you.

3

How can I decrease the risks of taking testosterone?

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

4

What about sex and pregnancy?

Taking testosterone decreases your fertility, and this can be permanent even if you discontinue testosterone. However, testosterone is not birth control. If you have sex with a person who makes sperm you can become pregnant. Testosterone generally increases libido, especially when you first start taking it. Some people experience vaginal dryness, which can impact sexual pleasure and functioning.



What changes can I expect to see?

Everyone is different, and the type of changes you see may vary. This depends on many factors including your genetics, the 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:

Hair growth

This is a permanent change and usually begins within a few months of starting testosterone. Hair growth often begins on your legs and back, then chest and stomach, followed by hair on your face. Facial hair can take up to 4 years or more to grow in fully and beards vary from person to person. Some people also experience a loss of hair on their temples and crown of the head, or “male pattern balding.”

Moodiness & emotional fluctuations

Your overall emotional state may change, and you might notice an increase in mood swings. Transition can feel like a second puberty that can be a roller coaster of emotions. Many people find that talking to a counselor, therapist or mental health provider can help in exploring new thoughts and feelings as you transition.

Increase in muscle size & changes in body shape

You may notice that your muscles increase and that fat may collect more around the belly and less on the hips and thighs. Many people experience an increase in metabolism and appetite as well.

Enlargement of the clitoris

This can be a permanent change. Growth of the clitoris can begin within a few months of starting testosterone and can vary from person to person. Some people experience soreness or discomfort as the clitoris enlarges.

Skin changes

Some people become more prone to acne while they are on testosterone, but it often improves after a year. You may also notice that your skin is coarser and oilier than it was before.

Voice changes

This is a permanent change and you will notice your voice begin to deepen within 3-6 months of beginning testosterone. Many people's voices change fully within a year.

Ovulation & periods stop

Periods often stop within 6 months of being on testosterone, although you may have some irregular bleeding from time to time. You will probably also stop ovulating (making an egg from the ovary). Testosterone is not birth control! If you are sexually active with someone who makes sperm you can become pregnant. There are several forms of birth control that you can take if you would like to prevent pregnancy. There are medications (such as Depo Provera, which is also a birth control method) that can help stop your period if it does not stop on its own. If you stop taking testosterone you may begin ovulating again, although this can be different from person to person.