

## Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy Information

Hormone therapy is a type of gender-affirming medical care that some transgender, non-binary and gender expansive people use to affirm their gender identity and bring about physical and emotional changes.

### How are hormones used?

- Some people take hormones regularly over a lifetime, others may choose to take them for a shorter period of time or even intermittently.
- The type of delivery method, dose, and time on hormones is an individual decision and varies based on each person's goals and how their body responds.
- Delivery method and dose may be changed over time, in consultation with a healthcare provider. Taking higher doses of hormones than prescribed does not increase benefits and may increase the risk of serious side effects.

### Do I need to take hormones?

- The decision to take gender affirming medication is an individual choice. For some people it can be affirming and support their gender identity and expression. Some people feel that hormones are not needed to express their gender identity at all.
- Hormone therapy is not needed to change a legal gender marker nor is it required to request surgeries.

### What does hormone therapy do?

- Hormones may help affirm gender identity for people who are transgender or non-binary through physical and emotional changes.
- No one can predict how fast or how much change will happen for each individual. One person's experiences may be very different from another's.
- It may take at least a month after beginning treatment for a person to notice any changes, though some people may experience changes more quickly.
- It can take from 2-5 years for all desired physical changes to take place.
- Some changes from hormones are permanent, even if medications are discontinued, and other changes are reversible.
- In addition to the expected physical changes, some people taking hormones may also notice changes in energy levels, libido (sex drive) and emotions. It is a good idea to develop a plan for support that may include others who have shared experiences with transition. The [Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity](#) is a great resource.

### What about reproduction and fertility?

- Hormones can stop or suppress gametes (egg or sperm).
- Hormone therapy is not a reliable contraception, it does not prevent a pregnancy.
- Stopping hormone therapy typically restarts gamete production, but fertility is not a guarantee.

### Is hormone therapy safe?

- For most people, hormones can be used safely when taken under the supervision of a healthcare provider.
- Due to family history or individual health concerns (such as heart disease, certain types of cancer, high cholesterol, liver disease, or certain blood clotting disorders), some people may have higher risks to consider.
- Health can be protected by exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight for one's frame, working with a care team on reducing stress, and reducing/eliminating nicotine use.
- Health maintenance and screening exams will continue based on the organs that are present.

### Anything else to consider when starting hormones?

- Taking hormones can expand people's sense of their own gender identity as well as expand their sexual orientation and attraction.
- For people who experience dysphoria, hormone therapy can decrease dysphoria in some aspects of their lives and increase dysphoria in other aspects.
- Hormones are prescription medications and therefore require visits to a healthcare provider and blood testing. These generally become less frequent over time, but can be as often as every 1 to 3 months when starting hormone therapy.

### I'm interested in starting hormone therapy, what's next?

- UCSB Student Health Services has clinicians that specialize in gender affirming hormone therapy and they would be happy to discuss your individual health, goals and treatment options. [Join the Line](#) to connect via phone to make an appointment. Through [Gateway](#), you can send a confidential email message to request an appointment or ask for more information.
- It is recommended to read the information sheet about hormones before your appointment to help you identify issues you would like to review with your clinician. This will be sent to you when your appointment is scheduled and can be found on the UCSB Student Health Services website.
- Your clinician will review both the potential benefits and risks of hormone therapy with you to help you know what changes to expect, address your concerns, and answer any questions you may have.
- Your clinician will ask you about your health history including any current or past medical issues for you as well as for your immediate family. Also, they need to know about any prescription medications, drugs, and substances you currently take.
- You will probably do lab work (blood tests) on this visit.

### Resources:

Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity: <http://rcsgd.sa.ucsb.edu/>

UCSB Student Health LGBTQIA advocate line at 805-893-3368