

Testosterone Information

Testosterone is used to reduce estrogen-related features and induce testosterone-related features in order to make you feel more at ease in your body.

It is important that you know what to expect from taking testosterone including physical and emotional changes, side effects and potential risks. The use of testosterone to treat gender dysphoria is not FDA approved. Long term medical effects and safety are not fully known and some potential risks are serious.

Each person responds differently to taking testosterone and the amount of change varies from person to person. Testosterone is available in several forms: injectable, topical preparation (gel) or patch. Most people use injectable testosterone.

Testosterone-related effects

Testosterone-related changes may include:	Expected onset	Expected maximum effect	Effect
Deeper voice	3-12 months	Years	Permanent
Growth of body and facial hair	3-6 months	3-5 years	Permanent
Growth of the external genitals (clitoris)	3-6 months	1-2 years	Permanent
Scalp hair loss (balding)*	>12 months	Variable	Permanent
Decreased fertility	Variable	Variable	Possibly Permanent
Increased muscle	6-12 months	2-5 years	Reversible
Fat redistribution; possible weight gain or loss	3-6 months	2-5 years	Reversible
Mood changes	Variable	Variable	Reversible
Changes to sex drive, sexual interests or sexual function	Variable	Variable	Reversible
Skin changes including increased oil and acne*	1-6 months	1-2 years	Reversible *scarring may be permanent
Dryness of internal genitals (vagina)*	3-6 months	1-2 years	Reversible
Stopping of monthly bleeding (period)	2-6 months	n/a	Reversible

*Medical interventions are available to help with hair loss, acne and genital dryness or these become problematic.

The **benefits** that hormone therapy can have on your health and quality of life may include:

- decreased discomfort related to gender
- increased success in work, school and relationships
- increased comfort in your body
- improved mental health

Potential Risks	
Increased red blood cells (polycythemia) Sleep apnea	Likely increased risk
Changes to cholesterol which may increase risk for heart attack or stroke Liver inflammation Harassment	Possible increased risk
Diabetes Heart and circulation (cardiovascular) problems Increased blood pressure	Possible increased risk if you have additional risk factors

Risks for some of these conditions may be affected by:

- Pre-existing physical or mental health conditions
- Cigarette smoking or other substance use
- Family history of health conditions
- Nutrition, exercise, stress

Fertility

Testosterone will likely make periods stop, but it is not effective contraception. If you have sex with a person who makes sperm, birth control is necessary if pregnancy prevention is desired.

Testosterone can endanger a fetus, so it is important to avoid pregnancy while taking testosterone.

If you think that you may want to be pregnant in the future, talk to your care provider about your options before you start testosterone.

Alternatives to Testosterone

You can achieve some change to your body with diet and exercise. Another way to change your body is to have surgery. You can discuss other options that you would like to try with your clinician. You can choose to stop taking testosterone at any time.

Have any questions or concerns?

UCSB Student Health Services has clinicians that specialize in gender affirming hormone therapy and they would be happy to discuss more details of testosterone treatment. An appointment gives you the best opportunity to discuss your health, goals and treatment options. [Join the Line](#) to speak to us via phone and make an appointment. Through [Gateway](#), you can send us confidential email message to request an appointment or ask for more information.

Call the Student Health LGBTQIA advocate line at 805-893-3368 for any other non-medical questions.