

Masculinizing Hormones

This handout provides information on testosterone therapy. If you have questions about the information provided here, please contact our office at 314-362-3500, option 2.

Laboratory Testing Schedule

Bloodwork is done often to check if the current medicine dose is working and is safe. If lab work is not done as often as instructed, your dose may not be increased and you may not achieve the results you are hoping to see.

Labs are drawn:

- Before starting hormone therapy
- Every 3 months for the first year
- Once every 6 months after the first year of therapy

Tips on getting started:

- Testosterone therapy may require prior authorization from your insurance before the pharmacy fills the prescription.
- **If you are interested in freezing eggs, you should do this before starting medicine. This can take several months to complete. Please let us know if you would like a referral.**
- We can teach you to give injections in the office on the day of your appointment.
- Please call to make a 3 month follow-up appointment after starting medication.

Masculinizing Effects from Testosterone Therapy

Effect	Expected Onset	Expected Maximum Effect	Reversibility
Skin oiliness/acne	1-6 months	1-2 years	Reversible
Facial/body hair growth	6-12 months	4-5 years	Partially reversible
Scalp hair loss	6-12 months*	Variable	Partially reversible
Increased muscle mass/strength	6-12 months	2-5 years**	Reversible
Body fat redistribution	1-6 months	2-5 years	Reversible
Cessation of periods	1-6 months	n/a	Partially reversible
Clitoral enlargement	1-6 months	1-2 years	Irreversible
Vaginal atrophy (thinning)	1-6 months	1-2 years	Reversible
Deepened voice	6-12 months	1-2 years	Irreversible

*dependent on hereditary factors

**dependent on exercise

Risks of Testosterone Therapy:

- Increased risk of heart disease by decreasing HDL (good cholesterol), increasing LDL (bad cholesterol), increasing blood pressure, and increasing fat deposition around internal organs. **We check cholesterol levels at least yearly.**
- Increased risk of diabetes by decreasing body's response to insulin, causing weight gain, and increasing fat deposition around internal organs. **We check a hemoglobin A1C (average of blood sugars over 3 months) every 1-3 years depending on other risk factors.**
- Increased risk of stroke and heart attack by increasing red blood cells and hemoglobin. **We check hemoglobin levels regularly (every 3 months in the first year and then twice yearly).**
- Increased risk of headaches or migraines.
- **Obstructive sleep apnea** may get worse with testosterone therapy, so if you have risk factors for this (for example, snoring, overweight or obesity, daytime sleepiness), we may refer you to sleep medicine for evaluation and treatment.
- Increased risk of sexually transmitted infections: the cervix and vaginal walls become more fragile causing tears or abrasions (this only applies if having vaginal sex).
- Testosterone does not protect against pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.
- Testosterone can be converted to estrogen by some tissues in the body. **Never take more testosterone than you are prescribed. Taking more testosterone will not make you see results more quickly, but may instead have the opposite effect if converted to estrogen.**
- Though it is not known if testosterone increases risk for certain types of cancers, you should still have regular pelvic exams and cervical cancer screenings by pap smear (unless you have had your uterus and cervix removed). Breast cancer screening recommendations vary based on whether you have had top surgery.
- Please be aware that there may be long-term risks to testosterone therapy that are not yet known.
- If you have any problems or concerns, please speak to our medical team.

Testosterone is a federally controlled substance regulated by the Drug Enforcement Agency.

This means there are restrictions on prescribing it to patients who are not being seen regularly.

When traveling you may not be able to get your testosterone filled in another state due to different states' laws regarding controlled substance prescriptions.