

## 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 is it used?

- Some people take hormones regularly over a lifetime, others may choose to take them short-term or even intermittently.
- The type of delivery method, dose, and timing of 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 your 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.
- Hormone therapy is not needed to change your legal gender marker nor is it required to request surgeries.

### What does hormone therapy do?

- 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 and will remain if the treatment is stopped. Other changes are reversible and will go away if the hormones are not taken.
- 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 support plan that may include others who have shared experiences with transition.

The [Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity](#) is a great resource.

# Student Health Service

## 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, some people may have some risks to consider.
- Exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, working on stress management, and reducing/eliminating nicotine use are keys to staying healthy.
- Health maintenance and screening exams are done based on organs that are present.

## Anything else to consider when starting hormones?

- Taking hormones can expand people's sense of their own gender identity, 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 that require visits to a healthcare provider and blood testing. This can be as often as every 1 to 3 months when starting and generally become less frequent over time.

## What about reproduction and fertility?

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

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

- Set up an appointment to see one of UCSB's Gender Affirming healthcare specialists by calling the appointment desk at 805-893-7731 or through your MyHealth portal under the "Make an appointment" tab, choose Clinic Appointments, then Medical Services and finally, Gender Affirming Care.

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