

UC SANTA BARBARA

Student Health Service

Testosterone Information

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

You must 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, or patch.

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
Lighter or no monthly bleeding (period)	2-6 months	n/a	Reversible

*Medical interventions are available to help with hair loss, acne, and genital dryness

Benefits that hormone therapy can have on health and quality of life:

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

Potential Risks	Probability
Increased red blood cells (polycythemia) Sleep Apnea	Likely increased risk
Changes in cholesterol may increase the risk of heart attack or stroke Liver inflammation Harassment	Possible increased risk
Diabetes Heart and circulation (cardiovascular) problems Increased blood pressure	Possible increased risk if additional risk factors

Risks for some of these conditions may be affected by:

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

Fertility

Testosterone will likely make periods stop, but it is not effective contraception. 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 changes 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.

An appointment gives you the best opportunity to discuss your health, goals, and treatment options.

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.

In your Student Health portal go to the SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT section, then choose MEDICAL SERVICES, next look for the GENDER CARE/HORMONES/TRANSGENDER heading. Then choose the option that best fits your request. This opens a page called: compose a new secure message. Write a brief message here and someone will respond within 24 hours (usually less) to get you scheduled.

Have any other questions or concerns?

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