

Testosterone



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You have been given a prescription for testosterone. As I explained to you, this is an important hormone which can really help your symptoms and quality of life. This leaflet explains in some more detail about it.

Testosterone is currently not licensed to women in the UK. However, it is prescribed by many menopause experts as it has proven benefits in many clinical trials. It is also very safe when it is used in the way that it has been prescribed for you.

What is testosterone?

Testosterone is one of the sex hormones that women produce. Many people think of it as the “male” hormone which is correct, but women need to have testosterone too. In fact, women produce three times as much testosterone than oestrogen before the menopause.

Testosterone is made in your ovaries and also your adrenal glands, which are small glands near your kidneys.

Levels of testosterone in your body gradually reduce as you become older.

What does testosterone do?

Even a very small amount of testosterone can really help with your emotions and energy. Testosterone can be really beneficial at improving your mood, energy, concentration and also sex drive (or libido).

When your levels of testosterone reduce, you may find that you desire sex less often and when you do have sex, it is not as pleasurable as it used to be, even though you still desire your partner.

Although many women find that taking HRT can really improve the tiredness that is often associated with the menopause, low testosterone levels can also contribute to this fatigue and lack of energy.

There is some evidence also that having lower testosterone levels can also affect your mood and increase your risk of being depressed.



Who needs testosterone treatment?

Testosterone is often given to women who are also taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT). It is very common to have low levels of testosterone as you go through your menopause.

If you have had your ovaries removed by an operation, then it is very likely that your levels of testosterone will become low very quickly. This is because your ovaries produce the majority of testosterone in your body.

It is possible to have your level of testosterone measured in your body. This is done by a simple blood test.

What are the side effects of testosterone treatment?

There are usually no side effects with testosterone treatment as it is given to replace the testosterone that you are otherwise lacking. Very occasionally women notice some increased hair growth in the area in which they have rubbed the gel. This can be avoided by changing the area of skin on which you rub the gel.

As the dose is so low, testosterone used in this way does not increase your risk of developing facial hair.

How is testosterone treatment given?

Testosterone is usually given as a gel which you rub into your skin. It comes as a gel in a small tube or a sachet and you only need to rub a pea-size amount of this gel into your skin. One tube or sachet should last around 10 days. It should be rubbed onto your lower abdomen or your thighs.

Alternatively testosterone may be given to some women as an implant.

It can sometimes take a few months for the full effects of testosterone to work in your body.

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There is a wealth of information available to you on the Internet, in books and in articles on this subject. However, much of it is out of date, inaccurate and / or misleading! My website contains some really useful facts and information.

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Louise qualified from Manchester University in 1994 and is a GP and menopause expert in Solihull, West Midlands, as well as a writer for numerous medical publications. She compiles and updates patient information leaflets for the multiple award winning website Patient.info. These are on various clinical subjects providing up-to-date information with links to recent references and guidelines.

Louise works as a medical editor for GP magazine and has authored several books on evidence-based medicine for general. She is an Editor for the British Journal of Family Medicine (BJFM) and Geriatric Medicine journal. She commissions articles for the BJFM's regular Women's Health supplement. She is an Editor and Reviewer for various e-learning courses and educational modules for the RCGP. She writes regular articles for GPonline.com, MIMS Learning, Independent Nurse and Practice Nursing. Louise also writes articles and courses for www.OnMedica.net.

She has a keen interest on the menopause and HRT. She feels passionately about trying to improve awareness of safe prescribing of HRT to healthcare professionals and women and has written many articles, editorials and given local and national presentations on this subject. She is the West Midlands lead for the Primary Care Women's Health Forum. She runs a menopause clinic in Solihull and she is a member of the International Menopause Society and the British Menopause Society.

Louise has contributed to healthcare articles in many different newspapers and magazines including: The Guardian, Daily Mail, Pregnancy and Birth, Country Life, Prima Baby, Now, Reveal and Heat. She writes a regular healthcare column for a Warwickshire and Cotswolds magazine, The Edge.

She has also been involved in television and radio work; she has given live interviews for BBC News 24 and has presented on programmes for "Health Livetime" for Granada. She has been interviewed on health matters on radio stations including Radio 4's Woman's Hour and BBC 5 live. Louise has participated in Embarrassing Bodies Live from the Clinic as one of their regular GPs in addition to being Maverick TV's medical consultant for this show and also "Born Naughty" which was a series looking into children's behaviours.

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