



GENDER AFFIRMING HORMONE LEVEL CHECK

Information on Masculinizing Hormones

▶ What is gender-affirming hormone therapy?

Masculinizing hormone therapy can increase the level of testosterone in the body. The effects of gender-affirming testosterone therapy in transmasculine people, assigned female at birth include:

- Increased muscle mass/strength
- Facial/body hair growth
- Deepening of voice
- Increased skin oiliness or acne
- Fat redistribution
- Cessation of menses (periods stop)
- Clitoral enlargement
- Vaginal atrophy
- Scalp hair loss

Changes may begin to occur after 1-6 months and up to 2-5 years after beginning to take testosterone.

▶ What is a gender-affirming hormone level check?

Hormone checks are a quick assessment of hormone levels in your body using a blood sample. We will provide you with your current hormone levels and a recommendation for you and your provider to consider in order to meet your desired goals.

NOTE: Taking more Testosterone will not make your changes progress more quickly but could cause serious side effects or complications. Excess testosterone can result in mood symptoms or irritability, bloating, pelvic cramping, or even a return of menstruation. High levels of testosterone also result in increased estrogen levels, as a percentage of all Testosterone in the body is converted to estrogen.

▶ What are the common gender-affirming hormones?

- Testosterone injectable:
 - Testosterone (100-200 mg every 2 weeks or 50-100 mg per week subcutaneous [in fat] or intramuscular [in muscle])
 - Testosterone undecanoate (1000 mg every 12 week)
- Testosterone patch (2.5 – 7.5 mg/day)
- Testosterone gel 1.6% (50-100 mg/day)

▶ Why do people check their testosterone levels?

Checking testosterone levels helps guide dosing changes in line with an individual's masculinization goals and helps ensure safety. Transmasculine people who are taking testosterone are at risk for erythrocytosis, a condition in which your body makes too many red blood cells. If your body makes too many red blood cells, you can be at risk of developing blood clots. Testosterone levels that are too high can also cause severe liver problems, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

▶ How often do people need to check their hormone levels?

Testosterone levels should be checked every 3 months during the first year you start taking testosterone and then every 6-12 months.

▶ When is the best time to have testosterone levels checked?

If you are using gels or patches, you may have your testosterone level checked at any time.

If you are taking injectable testosterone, like testosterone enanthate or cypionate, you may have your testosterone level checked 3-4 days after your last injections.

▶ What are ideal testosterone levels?

The ideal testosterone level for transmasculine people is between 300–1000 ng/dL. Your result will be under **Testosterone, serum** on your lab report.