



GENDER AFFIRMING HORMONE LEVEL CHECK

Information on Feminizing Hormones

▶ What are the common gender-affirming hormones?

Estrogens

- Estradiol pill (2.0-6.0 mg/day)
- Estradiol patch (0.025-0.2 mg/day)—new patch placed every 3-5 days
- Estradiol injectable (5-30 mg every 2 weeks or 2-10 mg every week)

Testosterone blockers (anti-androgens)

- Spironolactone (50-300 mg/day)
- Finasteride (1mg/day-5mg/day)
- Dutasteride (0.5 mg/day)

▶ Why do people check their hormone levels?

Transfeminine people check hormone levels to optimize feminization and ensure safety. Checking estrogen and testosterone levels helps guide dosing changes in line with an individual's feminization goals. Testosterone blockers (i.e. Spironolactone) can increase the risk of developing high levels of potassium in the body and low blood pressure. High potassium can be life-threatening and can cause muscle weakness, paralysis and abnormal heart rates. Periodic hormone and potassium level checks are important.

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

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

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

If you are taking gels, patches or pills hormones, you may have your hormone levels checked at any time.

If you are taking injectable hormones, like estradiol valerate, you may have your hormone levels checked 3-4 days after your last injections.

▶ What are ideal hormone levels?

The ideal estrogen level for transfeminine people is less than 200 pg/mL. Your result will be under **Estradiol** on your lab report.

The ideal testosterone level for transfeminine people is less than 55 ng/dL. Your result will be under **Testosterone, serum** on your lab report.

▶ What is gender-affirming hormone therapy?

Feminizing hormone therapy can increase the levels of estrogen and lower the levels of testosterone in the body. The effects of gender-affirming hormone therapy in transfeminine people, assigned male sex at birth include:

- Redistribution of body fat
- Breast growth
- Softening of skin and decreased oiliness of skin
- Decrease in muscle mass and strength
- Decreased sexual desire
- Decreased spontaneous erections
- Decreased erections and/or changes in sexual function
- Decreased testicular volume
- Decreased sperm production

Changes may begin to occur after 1 to 6 months and up to 3 years after beginning to take female hormones.

▶ 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.