

Testosterone: what to expect

Testosterone will cause changes in your body. Some of these changes will be permanent, meaning they won't go away if you stop taking testosterone. Some of the changes will be temporary, they will go away if you stop taking testosterone. The changes you go through might be different than the changes of someone else taking testosterone.



Photo from Center of Excellence
for Transgender Health

Permanent changes:

- **Hair:** More hair on your face, chest, back, butt, stomach, and ears. Your hair might start thinning or receding.
- **Voice:** Your voice might get deeper. If your voice gets deeper, it will be permanent.
- **Genitals:** Your clitoris will grow about 1½ - 2 inches.
- **Pregnancy:** It may be harder for you to get pregnant. This can be a permanent change for some people and a temporary change for others. If you think you want to be pregnant in your lifetime, talk to your doctor before starting testosterone.

Common temporary changes:

- **Body:** Your fat might move from your hips and thighs to your belly. You might feel more hungry, gain weight or feel bloated. You may sweat more and your body odor might change. You might see more pimples on your back, face and chest.
- **Skin:** Your skin might get rougher and your veins might stick out more.
- **Period:** You might not get a period while taking testosterone. If you forget to take your testosterone, you might see some spotting.
- **Sex:** You may want to have sex more often. You might have vaginal dryness. This can cause pain if you have vaginal sex. Using lube can help.
- **Emotional:** Your emotions might change. Talk to your doctor if you are feeling angry, sad, or are thinking about hurting yourself or others.
- **Medical:** Tell your doctor any medicines you are on before you start testosterone. Tell your doctor if you smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol as it may change the way hormones work in your body .

When will these changes happen?

| Change | Will start in: | Biggest change in: |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Oily skin/pimples | 1-6 months | 1-2 years |
| Periods stop | 2-6 months | n/a |
| Facial hair and body hair | 3-6 months | 3-5 years |
| Body fat changes | 3-6 months | 2-5 years |
| Clitoris grows | 3-6 months | 1-3 years |
| Vaginal dryness | 3-6 months | 1-2 years |
| Deeper voice | 3-12 months | 1-2 years |
| More muscle mass/strength* | 6-12 months | 2-5 years |
| Balding** | over 12 months | depends |

*depends on how much you work out

**depends on family history

Other tips:

- Only take the hormones given to you by your doctor. Make sure to come to all of your follow up visits.
- Talk to your doctor about your goals on hormones or if you're not seeing the results you want. Do not take more hormones without talking to your doctor first.
- Testosterone is not birth control. You can still get pregnant while taking testosterone. If you have sex with someone who could get you pregnant, talk to your doctor about your options for preventing pregnancy.
- It is not safe to reuse or share needles, but if you do, always be sure to rinse 3 times with water and bleach. Then soak in bleach for at least 30 seconds.